PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA 24 NOV 1988

`IS THIS WHERE I PAY THE ELECTRICITY BILL?`

Inquiry into the Report on the Efficiency Scrutiny into
Regionalisation within the Australian Electoral Commission

REPORT NUMBER TWO OF THE
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

October 1988

Australian Government Publishing Service
CANBERRA

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE

COMMONWEALTH

OF AUSTRALIA

INQUIRY INTO THE REPORT

ON THE EFFICIENCY SCRUTINY

INTO REGIONALISATION

WITHIN THE AUSTRALIAN

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Report Number Two of the

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'Is this where I pay the electricity bill?'

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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

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Secretary: Mr T R Rowe

During its Inquiry into the Efficiency Scrutiny Report on Regionalisation within the Australian Electoral Commission the Committee heard evidence from various witnesses about the small number of personal inquiries made in the Electoral Commission's Divisional Offices. The Efficiency Scrutineer told the Committee:

> If you go around the divisional offices to talk to staff about something, it is most unusual for somebody to come into the office. They are often there to pay the electricity bill anyway - they have mistaken us for the electricity commission. In fact, we had the official opening of the new office for the division of McEwen when the new division was set up, and we were all there with Lady McEwen and various members to have the official opening ceremony, and a gentleman walked in saying, 'Is this where I pay the electricity bill?'!

The question, 'Is this where I pay the electricity bill?', encapsulates an apparent difficulty many Australians have with the role of the Australian Electoral Commission. But more important to the Committee's Inquiry is the fact that the question is asked by many of those who visit the Commission's Divisional Offices. People who have questions on electoral matters tend to use either the telephone or the mail system.

The Inquiry has required the Committee to consider a range of widely differing views on the best organisational structure for the Electoral Commission. While most of the submissions presented to the Committee have argued for a continuation of the status quo, arguments for changing the structure are to be found in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and the Electoral Commission's submission to the Committee. The change recommended by the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and the Electoral Commission is to create Regional Offices by grouping together the Commission's existing Divisional Offices.

The Committee's consideration of regionalisation has led it to recommend some change in the structure of the Electoral Commission. In particular, the Committee has recommended regionalisation only occur in metropolitan areas and that it involve the grouping together of no more three Divisional Offices to form a new Regional Office. The issue of service to electors has been important to the Committee in making this recommendation.

A matter of concern for the Committee has been the need for the Electoral Commission to have modern computer equipment and systems. The Committee has found the Commission's existing computer facilities wanting and in many cases there are no computer facilities.

The Committee has not been satisfied with estimates of costs and benefits and computer equipment requirements contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and has recommended that the Commission seek independent external assistance in this area.

The Committee is grateful for the co-operation it has received from numerous individuals and organisations throughout its Inquiry. The Committee thanks the Electoral Commissioner and his staff for their assistance and notes its appreciation for the support given to the Inquiry by its Secretariat.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACOA	-	Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association
AEC	-	Australian Electoral Commission
the Agreement	-	Agreement between ACOA, APSA, FCU and the Government on 4% Second Tier Increases for Office Based and Related Classifications
APSA	-	Australian Public Service Association
ASO	-	Administrative Service Officer
CLAD	-	Clerical Administrative
the Committee	-	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
CSIRONET	-	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation [Computer] Network
DRO	-	Divisional Returning Officer
FCU	-	Federated Clerks' Union
LNP	-	Liberal and National Parties

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Local Knowledge

The Committee concludes that:

> the Divisional Office structure does not provide the only or necessarily the best means of acquiring local knowledge. (paragraph 5.8)

Computerisation

The Committee concludes that:

> as a matter of priority, the Australian Electoral Commission must pursue the acquisition of modern computer equipment and systems. (paragraph 5.20)

The Committee recommends that:

> the Australian Electoral Commission seek independent external advice on the computer equipment and systems needed in Australian Electoral Commission offices to enable the Australian Electoral Commission to achieve its goals in the best manner. (paragraph 5.23); and

> the Australian Electoral Commission adopt a more determined approach in seeking funds from the Federal Government for the purpose of acquiring modern computer equipment and systems. (paragraph 5.24)

Integrated Office Structure

The Committee recommends that:

> the Australian Electoral Commission seek to maximise the structural change and job redesign it can achieve through the Integrated Office Structure in combination with modern information technology. (paragraph 5.27)

Regionalisation

On balance the Committee concludes that:

> regionalisation of the Australian Electoral Commission's Divisional Offices should not proceed in rural areas because of the effect it would have on service to electors and the tasks of roll maintenance and election management (paragraph 5.29);

> transport and communications infrastructures which have developed in metropolitan areas and the proximity of metropolitan Divisional Offices to each other make metropolitan areas suitable for regionalisation (paragraph 5.31); and

> regionalisation in metropolitan areas provides opportunities for improved management efficiency without adversely affecting service to electors and the tasks of roll maintenance and election management. (paragraph 5.33)

The Committee recommends that:

> regionalisation of the Australian Electoral Commission's Divisional Offices only occur in metropolitan areas. The Regional Offices should be formed by the combination of up to three Divisional Offices; and

> senior staff within a metropolitan Regional Office at the Administrative Service Officer 4, Administrative Service Officer 5, or Administrative Service Officer 6 level have continuing responsibility for specific Divisions and be designated as Divisional Returning Officers for specific Divisions. (paragraph 5.37)

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW

- Chapter 1
- Chapter 2
- Chapter 3
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5

1.1   This is the second report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (hereafter referred to as 'the Committee'). The Report presents the findings and recommendations of the Committee's Inquiry into the Report on the Efficiency Scrutiny into Regionalisation within the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC).

1.2   The Efficiency Scrutiny was an internal review conducted by a senior officer of the AEC in the latter part of 1987 and was one of many efficiency scrutinies conducted throughout Commonwealth departments during 1986/87.

Chapter 1

1.3   Chapter 1 provides an overview of the Committee's Report and lists the main conclusions and recommendations the Committee has made.

Chapter 2

1.4   Chapter 2 provides background information to the Committee's Inquiry and explains briefly the purpose of efficiency scrutinies. Chapter 2 also summarises the AEC's Efficiency Scrutiny into Regionalisation, that is a proposal to group some of the AEC's 148 Divisional Offices together to form Regional Offices.

1.5   The Efficiency Scrutiny sought to examine whether the grouping of Divisional Offices into Regional Offices would:

        .   secure more effective compliance with the
             Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918;

        .   lead to a more efficient use of resources; and

        .   maintain and even improve levels of service to
             electors.

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1.6   Also the Efficiency Scrutiny was to consider *Regional Office* models, the costs and benefits associated with regionalisation, implementation strategies for regionalisation and the implications of regionalisation for AEC staff. In conducting the Scrutiny the Scrutineer was to use previous reports and investigations on regionalisation and to seek the views of AEC management, staff and staff associations.

1.7   Chapter 2 also notes details of the Committee's Inquiry.

Chapter 3

1.8   Chapter 3 provides a description of the AEC and its activities and then summarises the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and the AEC's submission to the Committee. The latter part of Chapter 3 summarises the views expressed in other submissions and evidence presented to the Committee.

1.9   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report argues that regionalisation should occur in both metropolitan and rural areas and in particular, that regionalisation should occur in conjunction with computerisation. The Report notes the need for computerisation in the AEC's offices and argues that regionalisation could facilitate computerisation at a lesser cost because fewer offices would exist. In arguing for regionalisation the Efficiency Scrutiny Report draws on the findings of two earlier reviews of the AEC, a 1974 review by the consultant firm W D Scott & Co. and a 1985 review conducted by the Human Resources Management Section of the AEC.

1.10   The AEC's submission presents a different argument for regionalisation stating that since the time of the Efficiency Scrutiny the Australian Public Service has undergone substantial change with the introduction of a new staff classification structure. The submission details the consequences of this new structure and other service wide changes for the AEC explaining that the AEC is now faced with opting for regionalisation as a means of enabling it to contain its salary bill. While computerisation remains highly desirable, the AEC submission does not link regionalisation and computerisation as does the Efficiency Scrutiny Report.

1.11   The `Other Views' in Chapter 3 are those of members of the Commonwealth Parliament, major political parties, the Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association, Divisional Returning Officers and local councils. In general, these groups do not support the regionalisation proposals in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report.

Chapter 4

1.12   Chapter 4 examines the major issues of concern to the Committee in its Inquiry. These issues are:

.   *local knowledge;*

.   *education;*

.   service to electors;

.   staff issues;

.   computerisation;

.   the *Integrated Office Structure;*

.   maintenance and provision of electoral rolls; and

.   the Efficiency Scrutiny and Scrutiny Report.

Chapter 5

1.13   Chapter 5 presents the Committee's conclusions and recommendations on issues raised during *the Inquiry.*

1.14   The Committee notes in Chapter 5 that its Inquiry has provided an opportunity for all interested parties to comment on the merits or otherwise of regionalisation. This is important because of the widespread interest in the issue *and the fact* that the Efficiency Scrutiny was criticised for being conducted too quickly and having terms of reference that were too narrow.

1.15   While the Committee makes conclusions and recommendations on a number of issues, the two *most important* are computerisation and regionalisation.

1.16   The Committee identifies computerisation as an issue of major concern noting that it is a serious deficiency in the AEC that its existing computer systems cannot cope with all the demands placed upon them, that at this time some of its basic finance and personnel systems are yet to be fully computerised and that at the Divisional Office level there are officers who have bought their own personal computers so that they may perform their duties more efficiently.

1.17   The Committee concludes that:

as a matter of priority, the Australian Electoral Commission must pursue the acquisition of modern computer equipment and systems. (paragraph 5.20)

1.18   The Committee has doubts about estimates of costs and benefits in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and questions the computer equipment needs which are set out in the Report.

1.19   The Committee recommends that:

the Australian Electoral Commission seek independent external advice on the computer equipment and systems needed in Australian Electoral Commission offices to enable the Australian Electoral Commission to achieve its goals in the best manner. (paragraph 5.23)

1.20   The Committee also notes the AEC's unsuccessful attempts to obtain funding for computer equipment and systems. The Committee states its view that the AEC has a strong case for funding and recommends that:

the Australian Electoral Commission adopt a more determined approach in seeking funds from the Federal Government for the purpose of acquiring modern computer equipment and systems. (paragraph 5.24)

1.21   The Committee states in Chapter 5 that it has sought to consider the broad issues associated with regionalisation rather than examine electorates on a case by case basis. In addition, the Committee notes that it has approached the regionalisation issue mindful of the fact that the AEC is responsible for the management of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 and that the Act requires there to be a Divisional Returning Officer for each Commonwealth Electoral Division.

1.22   The Committee concludes that:

regionalisation of the Australian Electoral Commission's Divisional Offices should not proceed in rural areas because of the effect it would have on service to electors and the tasks of roll maintenance and election management. (paragraph 5.29)

1.23   However, the Committee states its belief that transport and communications infrastructures which have developed in metropolitan areas and the proximity of Divisional Offices to each other in metropolitan areas make these areas suitable for regionalisation. The Committee concludes that:

transport and communications infrastructures which have developed in metropolitan areas and the proximity of metropolitan Divisional Offices to each other make metropolitan areas suitable for regionalisation; (paragraph 5.31) and

regionalisation in metropolitan areas provides opportunities for improved management efficiency without adversely affecting service to electors and the tasks of roll maintenance and election management. (paragraph 5.33)

1.24   While making this conclusion the Committee states that it has no wish to draft specific proposals for the regionalisation of metropolitan offices. The task of formulating the final regionalisation scheme is the responsibility of the AEC. However, the Committee does specify the basic characteristics of the Regional Offices that it believes should be created in metropolitan areas. In particular, the Committee is of the view that in any metropolitan Regional Office there should be officers at either the Administrative Services Officer (ASO) 4, ASO 5 or ASO 6 level who are responsible for specific Divisions on a continuing basis and that they be designated as Divisional Returning Officers for their respective Divisions.

1.25   The Committee recommends that:

regionalisation of the Australian Electoral Commission's Divisional Offices only occur in metropolitan areas. The Regional Offices should be formed by the combination of up to three Divisional Offices; and

senior staff within a metropolitan Regional Office at the Administrative Service Officer 4, Administrative Service Officer 5 or Administrative Service Officer 6 level have continuing responsibility for specific Divisions and be designated as Divisional Returning Officers for specific Divisions. (paragraph 5.37)

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

- Efficiency Scrutinies
- The Regionalisation Scrutiny
- The Committee's Inquiry

Efficiency Scrutinies

2.1   On   25 September 1986,   the Prime Minister,   the
Hon. R J L Hawke, announced the establishment of an Efficiency
Scrutiny Unit to oversee a program of scrutinies or examinations
of various aspects of administration and management in the
Australian Public Service.

2.2   In an information booklet prepared by the Efficiency
Scrutiny Unit a scrutiny was defined as:

> a method of reviewing an activity or function
> swiftly and in depth after having taken a
> fresh look at the relevant issues.[1]

2.3   It was intended that scrutinies would be carried out by
the staff of departments and other Commonwealth organisations.
The scrutinies were to help departments get better value for
money from their resources and to facilitate the questioning of
entrenched assumptions. As an incentive departments were entitled
to retain 25% of the savings achieved through changes resulting
from an efficiency scrutiny. The '25%' could be used on staff
development, the acquisition of improved technology or any other
means   a department   may   find to improve   efficiency and
productivity.

The Regionalisation Scrutiny

2.4   On   11   August   1987 the   Electoral Commissioner,
Dr Colin Hughes, wrote in a circular to all Australian Electoral
Commission (AEC) staff that he had selected regionalisation of
the AEC's Divisional Offices as the subject of the AEC's
scrutiny. He explained his choice:

> Reflecting identification as long ago as the
> W.D. Scott Report (1974) of the introduction
> of Regional Offices in metropolitan areas as
> the preferred option to secure benefits in
> better staff morale and improved efficiency,
> and continuing concern at the inroads which a
> uniquely large number of very small local
> offices make on the Commission's limited
> resources of staff and cash, I have selected
> grouping the Commission's Divisional Offices
> into   Regional   Offices,   primarily   in

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1. Scrutinies, A guide for ministers and managers, Efficiency
   Scrutiny Unit, Canberra, December 1986, p. [1].

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metropolitan areas and the largest provincial cities, as the subject of the efficiency scrutiny.[2]

2.5   The Electoral Commissioner noted that he had asked Ms Dianne Saunders, the Deputy Australian Electoral Officer for Victoria to act as the Efficiency Scrutineer and that Ms Saunders had accepted the task. She would be assisted by one or more personal assistants as required.

2.6   As with other efficiency scrutinies the relevant unions were to be involved. The Electoral Commissioner indicated he had distributed the proposed terms of reference and scrutiny methodology to the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association (ACOA) and the Australian Public Service Association (APSA) for their comments. Both the ACOA and APSA would be consulted during the scrutiny and they would have the preliminary findings put to them before the final report was presented to the Government.

2.7   On 27 August 1987 the Scrutineer wrote to all AEC staff advising of the terms of reference for the scrutiny and its methodology.

2.8   The terms of reference for the regionalisation scrutiny were defined thus:

> The scrutiny will examine whether the grouping of Divisional Offices, in particular those in metropolitan areas and the larger provincial cities, into regional offices would
>
> .   secure more effective compliance with the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918;
>
> .   result in greater efficiency in the use of resources; and
>
> .   maintain and, if possible, improve present levels of service to electors.
>
> In particular, the scrutiny will consider and report on
>
> .   costs and benefits of regionalisation vis a vis current arrangements;
>
> .   regional office models;

- .   possible groupings of Divisions into regions;

- .   implementation strategies;

- .   staffing consequences; and

- .   consequences for structures and resources in Head Offices and Central Office to the extent that such consequences are immediately identifiable in the present scrutiny.[3]

2.9   The methodology of the Scrutiny was as follows. It would begin on a date to be determined in September 1987 with a view to concluding in time for a report to be presented to the Government by the end of November 1987. In preparing the scrutiny report, Ms Saunders was to have regard to:

- .   previous reports/investigations/writings on the subject; and

- .   the views of senior management in Central and State Head Offices, of Divisional Office staff, and of staff associations (ACOA/APSA).[4]

2.10   The Scrutiny commenced on 7 September 1987 and 52 submissions were received from AEC staff. Numerous discussions were held between the Scrutineer and AEC staff and staff in other relevant organisations.

2.11   On 11 November 1987 a draft report on the Scrutiny was forwarded to the ACOA and APSA for comment by 24 November. Similarly, copies of the report were dispatched to all AEC on 11 and 12 November. Seventy-eight replies were received but at the time of the report's finalisation no response had been received from either the ACOA or APSA.

The Committee's Inquiry

2.12   On 29 January 1988, the Minister for Home Affairs, Senator the Hon. Robert Ray, wrote to the Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters referring the Scrutiny's report, 'Efficiency Scrutiny into Regionalisation', to the Committee for its consideration.

2.13   On 8 February 1988 the Committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into the Efficiency Scrutiny Report. The Inquiry was advertised in the national press on 18 and 19 February. The Committee also wrote to registered political parties and other interested persons and organisations inviting submissions. The Committee received some 160 submissions from the Electoral Commissioner and other AEC staff, members of the Commonwealth Parliament, the Liberal and National Parties, local councils, the

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2. AEC, Efficiency Scrutiny into Regionalisation: Volume Two - Attachments, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p. 2.

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3. AEC, Volume Two - Attachments, Attachment 2, p. 3.
4. AEC, Volume Two - Attachments, Attachment 2, p. 3.

ACOA, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Industrial Relations.

2.14   Public hearings were held in Canberra and Melbourne on:

.   Wednesday, 6 April -   The Electoral Commissioner and other senior AEC officers;

.   Tuesday, 10 May -   Members of the House of Representatives;

.   Wednesday, 11 May -   Representatives of the ACOA, Divisional Returning Officers and representatives of the Narrandera Shire Council;

.   Monday, 23 May -   Members of the House of Representatives; and

.   Thursday, 16 June -   The Electoral Commissioner and other AEC staff including the Efficiency Scrutineer, representatives of the Department of Finance and representatives of the Department of Industrial Relations.

THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION AND REGIONALISATION PROPOSALS

    .   The Australian Electoral Commission
    .   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report
    .   The Electoral Commission Submission
    .   Other Views

The Australian Electoral Commission

3.1   The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) was established on 21 February 1984 and replaced the Australian Electoral Office, first established in 1902. The AEC is a statutory authority and has responsibility for administering Commonwealth elections and referendums.

3.2   The AEC consists of a Chairman (a judge of the Federal Court), the Electoral Commissioner (the chief executive officer of the Commission), and one other non-judicial member who must be the Permanent Head of a Commonwealth department or hold a position of equivalent status. The Chairman and the non-judicial member hold their offices on a part-time basis.

3.3   Other statutory office holders in the AEC are:

    .   the Deputy Electoral Commissioner;

    .   an Australian Electoral Officer for each State;

    .   an Assistant Australian Electoral Officer for each State; and

    .   a Divisional Returning Officer for each Division.

3.4   The AEC has three levels of management:

    .   a Central Office located in Canberra;

    .   six Head Offices located in each State capital city and a combined Head Office/Divisional Office in Darwin; and

    .   148 Divisional Offices located within (or close to) each Commonwealth Electoral Division.

3.5   Approximately 60% of the AEC's staff are located in Divisional Offices. On average each Divisional Office has 3.5 staff. This includes a Divisional Returning Officer, a Divisional Clerk and a clerical assistant. Area Managers oversee the operations of Divisional Offices. Figure 3.1 shows the organisational structure of the AEC.

Figure 3.1 Organisation Chart of the Australian Electoral Commission

Australian Electoral Commission

Audit Committee
Internal Audit
Industrial Elections
State Territory Management

Australian Electoral Officers for the States

State	No. of Divisions
NSW (inc ACT)	53
Victoria	39
Queensland	24
Western Australia	13
South Australia	13
Tasmania	5

Electoral Commissioner

Deputy Electoral Commissioner

National Consultative Council
State Consultative Councils

Director Northern Territory

Computer Services
Research, Legislative Projects and F.O.I

Development & Research
Assistant Commissioner

Funding & Disclosure

Operations Policy & Coordination

Central Office Management

Information & Education
Assistant Commissioner

Information

Education Programs

Aboriginal Electoral Information Service

Corporate Services
Assistant Commissioner

Finance & General Services

Personnel Services

Source: AEC, Corporate Information Technology Plan, June 1988, Attachment 1, p. 1.

3.6   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report states that the AEC is responsible for two major programs, viz.:

.   Parliamentary elections and referendums; and

.   Industrial and analogous elections.[1]

3.7   The   parliamentary and referendums program was of concern to the efficiency scrutiny. This program can be divided into three smaller programs, viz.:

1. roll maintenance;

2. conduct of elections and referendums; and

3. program policy and review.

3.8   Compulsory   enrolment   and   compulsory voting   for elections in Australia require that electoral rolls be compiled and maintained. Section 84 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (the Electoral Act) provides that the Governor-General may make agreements for joint enrolment administration with the Governor of a State or the Administrator of the Northern Territory.

3.9   The current arrangements vary between States and the AEC's Corporate Information Technology Plan summarises the arrangements:

In New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, the AEC is responsible for the preparation, alteration and revision   of the common State/Commonwealth electoral rolls in force in those States. In South Australia, in respect of the maintenance of the common roll, the AEC is responsible for data capture and   liaison   with   the   State   Electoral Department. In Western Australia separate Commonwealth and State rolls are maintained but the Commonwealth provides enrolment data to the State under the joint agreement. For the Northern Territory a de facto joint roll exists which is maintained on the basis of Electoral Districts which are coterminous with the NT Legislative Assembly Electoral Divisions.

In   Queensland,   separate Commonwealth and State rolls are maintained, but a common electoral enrolment form is used, enabling persons to be enrolled on each roll while only completing one form.[2]

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1. AEC, Efficiency Scrutiny into Regionalisation: Volume One –
   Report, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p. 3.
2. AEC, Corporate Information Technology Plan, June 1988, p. 2.

3.10   The Australian electorate comprises some 10 million voters and each year some 2-3 million roll transactions are made. Section 92 of the Electoral Act states that at least once in every period of two years the AEC shall conduct a habitation review (house-to-house survey) in each State and Territory as a means of obtaining information to update electoral rolls. Despite the provisions of the Electoral Act, the timing of elections has prevented habitation reviews being conducted once every two years. On average federal elections occur once every 2.5 years.

The Efficiency Scrutiny Report

3.11   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report presented the findings of the Efficiency Scrutiny into Regionalisation. The main recommendation contained in the Report was that Regional Offices should be established in both metropolitan and country areas by grouping together Divisional Offices and that in conjunction with regionalisation there should be a program of computerisation.

3.12   The Report noted that the history of the Divisional Office in the AEC went back to the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1902 which provided for single member Divisions for the House of Representatives with each Division being the responsibility of a Divisional Returning Officer (DRO). Originally the position of DRO was a part-time one but over time it became full-time. Also, additional staff had been added to each Divisional Office. By 1974 the staffing arrangements for individual Divisional Offices included a DRO, a Divisional Clerk and one or two clerical assistants.

3.13   The Report noted the career pattern of DROs:

> The traditional career pattern of Divisional staff was initial recruitment to the Post Office as messenger, then Post Office Clerk, to a Divisional Office as its Clerk and then finally DRO. Until recent years, Head Office and Central Office staff numbers were small; promotion beyond DRO was limited to a very small group who became the Australian Electoral Officers for their States. Some DROs, as they accumulated seniority, sought to transfer to less demanding or more convenient Divisions, especially to Divisions located close to home. Consequently, new DROs were often posted to the most demanding Divisions and those in rural areas.[3]

3.14   The Report drew on the findings of two earlier reviews; one conducted in 1974 by the management consultant firm W.D. Scott & Co. into the structure, systems and facilities of the then Australian Electoral Office and the other, a 1985 review of Divisional Offices by the then Human Resources Management Section of the AEC's Control Office.

The Scott Report

3.15   The Scott Report was prepared following the May 1974 federal election which brought with it immense pressures on DROs and the AEC as a whole. These pressures were reflected in 'an unprecedented surge of industrial problems and breakdowns in health'.[4]

3.16   W.D. Scott & Co. found there were management problems at the Divisional Office level and identified four causes. They were:

    .   insufficient staffing;

    .   unbalanced workloads;

    .   inadequate support; and

    .   smallness and isolation.[5]

3.17   Recommendations to overcome the problems included:

    .   the establishment of a fourth officer in Divisional Offices to be subject to review in 2-4 years when it was anticipated a new computer system would be in place;

    .   adjustment of DROs' duties so that they could better manage Divisional Offices; and

    .   improvements in training, supply and systems.

3.18   The Scott Report stated that the Divisional Office structure limited the promotion opportunities for Divisional staff and put severe management strains on these staff. It proposed the establishment of a system of Regional Offices, restricted initially to metropolitan areas. These offices would not be groupings of Divisional Offices working separately but four or five DROs working under the control of a Regional Manager.

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3. AEC, Volume One - Report, p. 5.

4. Minutes of Evidence, p. S462.
5. Minutes of Evidence, pp. S451-S589.

3.19   The advantages of this Regional Office structure were listed as:

. an improved promotion structure for all staff

. avoidance of the isolation of the small office

. better opportunities for staff supervision

. better opportunities for training

. gradual introduction of a new DRO into his election tasks

. strengthened control by Head Office

. specialising of support staff e.g. for accounting, audits, stores, staff records

. sharing unequal workloads between Divisions e.g. those Divisions experiencing a distribution of preferences could receive assistance from the others in the same Regional Office

. more efficient and economical communications, delivery of supplies, etc

. the larger office would justify a high quality office in a prime position, with better office equipment e.g. electric duplicators and photocopiers

. reduction or elimination of staff movements now required to relieve recreation leave

. capacity to meet temporary absences.[6]

3.20   The disadvantages were noted to be:

. the DRO could become less familiar with his Division

. the Divisional Office could be more remote from the electors and the candidates

. partly as a result of these two factors there could be some impairment of the purity of the roll.[7]

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6. Minutes of Evidence, p. S503.
7. Minutes of Evidence, p. S503.

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3.21   Subsequent to the Scott Report a pilot Regional Office was planned for Melbourne. It was intended to test the Regional Office concept while maintaining a skeleton staff in existing Divisional Offices. However, the pilot project was abandoned at the time of the 'Lynch Razor Gang' as a cost-cutting measure.

The 1985 Review

3.22   In 1985 the Human Resources Management Section in the AEC's Central Office conducted a review of Divisional Offices. The reasons for this review were that:

1. the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 had been amended significantly in 1983/84;

2. Divisional staff had concerns about the staffing levels in Divisional Offices; and

3. it was some 11 years since the Scott Report had been written.

3.23   The 1985 Review concluded that while all Divisional Offices carried out the same functions, the variations in the characteristics of Divisions did not warrant uniform staffing of the Offices. The Review recommended that 'a minimum of 3 Public Service Act staff should be maintained even when a habitation review or an election was in progress.'[8] However, additional staff might be made available if the Divisional Office could demonstrate they were warranted.

3.24   The 1985 Review also reiterated the findings of the Scott Report noting that the Divisional Office structure did not facilitate mobility for staff or a career structure. The 1985 Review saw that the '... concept of Regional Offices had much to commend it.'[9]

The Efficiency Scrutiny Report

3.25   In reaching its recommendation that regionalisation should occur, the Efficiency Scrutiny Report noted advantages and disadvantages of the Divisional Office structure. It drew on the findings of the Scott Report noting that the Divisional Office structure imposed severe strains on Divisional Office staff while at the same time limiting their opportunities for advancement. The DRO was portrayed as someone required to manage a fairly normal office and then to be subject to severe pressures and deadlines at election times. As a result some tasks were completed only by working excessive overtime.

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8. AEC, Volume One - Report, p. 9.
9. AEC, Volume One - Report, p. 9.

17

3.26   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report identified arguments for and against the existing Divisional Office field structure in four categories:

.   staff issues;

.   service to electors and others;

.   functional issues - roll maintenance and the conduct of elections; and

.   premises and facilities.

Staff Issues

3.27   The Divisional Office structure was seen to lead to greater dedication by staff and it was noted that many submissions to the Efficiency Scrutiny saw benefits in being able to work in an office close to home. Numerous disadvantages were listed. They included the fact that Divisional Offices led to a feeling of isolation, made it difficult and costly to find relief staff, limited opportunities for staff development and training, and offered a poor career structure. Also, it was noted that small offices could be affected by interpersonal conflict.

3.28   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report concluded:

> ... the disadvantages of Divisional Offices mentioned today are much the same as those noted by the Scott Report in 1974. There is no evidence to suggest that staff dedication and job satisfaction can only be achieved in a Divisional Office structure and would be necessarily lost in another structure. Staff in larger Head Offices can also be dedicated to their work and achieve job satisfaction.[10]

Service to Electors and Others

3.29   An advantage of Divisional Offices was seen to be their convenience for electors. They enabled electors to identify with their Division and made it easy for electors wishing to make an oral postal vote at election time or just an ordinary inquiry. In contrast, it was stated that service was not uniform across all Divisional Offices. More importantly it was not necessary for voters to visit Divisional Offices in person. Most queries could be dealt with efficiently by either mail or telephone.

3.30   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report noted 'The personal link between electors and the Divisional Office is not strong.'[11]

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10. AEC, Volume One - Report, p. 13.
11. AEC, Volume One - Report, p. 14.

Functional Issues - Roll Maintenance and Conduct of Elections

3.31   Many AEC staff indicated to the Efficiency Scrutiny that the Divisional Office structure enabled Divisional staff to build up local knowledge. This was important for electoral roll maintenance and the conduct of elections. The Efficiency Scrutiny Report agreed that local knowledge was important but stated:

> ... the argument that [local knowledge] can only be developed through separate Divisional Offices cannot be sustained. This argument suggests that a divisional boundary acts something like a force field - if you move outside it, then gaining knowledge of what lies within is no longer possible.
>
> Local knowledge can be developed in many ways. For instance, by travelling within the Division, by telephone discussions with relevant authorities, by reading newspapers circulating in the area, by studying maps, by visiting schools, by reading reports from local government authorities and State Housing Commissions, etc.
>
> Staff in Divisions with offices currently located outside their boundaries are quite capable of gaining local knowledge. Most large rural Divisions manage with one office ... but only a small portion of the Division could be described as 'local' to the office. Such Divisions do successfully maintain a roll and conduct elections. Proximity to the area of operation is not essential, but good management is.[12]

3.32   The Report concluded:

> ... it is clear that any other field structure must make provision for staff to travel within the area, and develop the local knowledge which is valuable in conducting elections and roll maintenance. In particular, resources now locked up in the overheads of metropolitan Divisional Offices should be redirected to meet the needs of rural Divisions and provide funds to enable them to travel within the Division and to attend training courses in Head Offices.[13]

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12. AEC, Volume One - Report, p. 15.
13. AEC, Volume One - Report, p. 15.

Premises and Facilities

3.33   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report noted that AEC staff did not see any particular advantages in the existing Divisional Office premises. It was suggested that the isolation of the Divisional Offices meant staff sometimes worked in poor accommodation. It was clear from other comments that most Divisional Offices were bereft of modern office equipment and in particular, had no access to office automation facilities such as word-processing. What office facilities were provided in Divisional Offices led to a duplication of overhead costs.

3.34   Two alternatives to the existing Divisional Office structure were presented. They were centralisation and regionalisation. Centralisation was seen to be cheap but it had no other redeeming features. Moreover, the Australian electoral system would be difficult to administer from a centralised organisation. The Report concluded:

> A permanent field structure located in all States and Territories is the best means of protecting the democratic process in this country.[14]

3.35   This conclusion was tempered by the fact that the existing structure was expensive. The Report suggested that expenditure might be reduced by a combination of centralisation and decentralisation. In particular, Divisional Offices could be grouped to form Regional Offices and some functions could be devolved from Head Offices to Regional Offices.

3.36   Four models for Regional Offices were considered:

. a modified co-location model;

. a functional model;

. a hybrid model; and

. initial co-location, and review after the next election.[15]

3.37   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report recommended initial co-location of Divisional Offices with a review after the next election. However, if funds were not available the hybrid model was to be recommended.

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14. AEC, <u>Volume One - Report</u>, p. 17.
15. A detailed description of these models, their advantages and disadvantages is contained in Appendix A. The regionalisation scheme proposed in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report is contained in Appendix C.

3.38   Also, regionalisation was shown to be possible in various forms. For example, it could be limited to metropolitan areas or it could encompass metropolitan and country areas. Whatever form might be adopted, the Report made it clear that computerisation and in particular, the provision of an online computer system was to be an integral part of regionalisation:

> There is no point in proceeding with regionalisation unless adequate resources are provided. It is absolutely essential that a modern computer system is an integral part of the process, to provide basic office automation. Otherwise, regionalisation will *simply transfer inefficient, manual procedures* from Divisional Offices to a regional location.[16]

3.39   The introduction of computerisation into the existing 148 Divisional Offices was costed at $10,200,000 plus $1,800,000 in annual operating costs. Also, despite reductions in Head Office staff, the AEC's annual costs would rise by more than $1,125,400. The Report presented two options. Option 1 entailed regionalisation in metropolitan areas and substantial regionalisation in *country areas whereas Option* 2 entailed regionalisation in metropolitan areas and minimal regionalisation in country areas. The recommendation of the Scrutineer was that Option 1 be selected on economic grounds. The options are summarised in Table 3.1.

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16. AEC, <u>Volume One - Report</u>, p. 62.

Table 3.1 Summary of the Efficiency Scrutiny Report's Regionalisation Options

		No Regionalisation	Regionalisation	
			Option 1 Regionalisation in metropolitan areas and most country areas	Option 2 Regionalisation in metropolitan areas and minimal country areas
1.	Number of Divisional Offices Required	148	47	65
2.	Change in staff	n/a	-85	-69
3.	Computer system: . Establishment costs . Annual operating costs	$10,200,000 $1,800,000	$3,842,000 $637,900	$4,855,200 $903,200
4.	Regional Offices: . Establishment costs	n/a	$2,720,400	$2,451,300
5.	Annual savings[1]	-$1,125,400	$1,314,300	$560,700
6.	Payback period	n/a	5-8 years	13-15 years

Note: (1) If computerisation occurred without regionalisation there would be an increase in annual costs of more than $1,125,400.

Option 1 (regionalisation of metropolitan areas and substantial regionalisation in country areas combined with computerisation of the resulting offices) generates annual savings for the AEC of $1,314,300. The accrued savings offset the costs of changing to Regional Offices in 5-8 years. Compared to providing the computer system in existing offices, the costs of changing to Regional Offices are offset in less than one year.

Option 2 (regionalisation in metropolitan areas and minimal regionalisation in country areas combined with computerisation of the resulting offices) generates annual savings for the AEC of $560,000. The accrued savings offset the cost of changing to Regional Offices in 13-15 years. Compared to providing the computer system in existing offices, the cost of changing to these Regional Offices are still offset in less than one year.

Source: AEC, Volume One - Report, pp. (i)-(ii).

The Electoral Commission's Submission

3.40   The AEC's submission to the Committee re-affirmed the Commission's view that regionalisation of Divisional Offices should occur together with computerisation. The AEC was of the view that this was the most effective means of achieving:

.   efficient and effective electoral administration;

.   an improved career structure for field staff; and

.   immediate and continuing cost savings.

3.41   However, the AEC pointed out that the situation it faced had changed dramatically since the preparation of the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and as a result the rationale for wanting   regionalisation had changed.   The AEC now   viewed regionalisation as an effective means of containing its salary bill. Computerisation was very desirable but something that could be forgone.

3.42   The AEC's submission stated that the AEC's ability to maintain its Divisional Office structure was threatened by increasing costs and reduced funding and that this problem was compounded by:

.   a   substantially increased   salary bill   which resulted   from recommendations   of the   Office Structures Review being implemented throughout the Australian Public Service; and

.   additional financial impositions required by the Department of Finance.

3.43   The Office Structures Review was undertaken in the period 1985 to November 1987. The Review resulted in an agreement between the Government and Public Service unions which was ratified by the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission under the National Wage Case 'Second Tier' Restructuring and Efficiency Principle on 10 November 1987. The Agreement provided for wage increases (to a maximum of 4%) if offset by restructuring, greater efficiency and changes in work practices. The main aspect of the Agreement between the Government and the unions was the establishment of a new 8-tier Integrated Office Structure which incorporated some 120 previous classifications.[17] Appendix B show some of these classifications and the new 8-tier structure.

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17. A copy of the Agreement, (Agreement between the ACOA, APSA, FCU and the Government on 4% Second Tier Increases for Office Based and Related Classifications) is an attachment to the submission to the Committee prepared by the Department of Industrial Relations. (See Minutes of Evidence, pp. 647-663.)

3.44   The effects of these changes, as estimated by the AEC, were that:

1. the AEC's total salary bill increased - for example, DROs who previously were in the Clerical Administrative Officer (CLAD) Class 7 classification with salaries in the range $29,782 - $31,423 now became part of the new Administrative Service Officer (ASO) 6 classification with salaries in the range $30,800 - $35,135. Similar effects were seen with Divisional Office Clerical Assistants Grade 4 being broad-banded with Clerical Assistants Grade 5 into a new ASO 2 level and Clerical Assistants Grade 2 becoming ASO 1 level officers;

2. a supervisor-subordinate anomaly was created - DROs who were previously CLAD Class 7 officers and Area Managers who were previously CLAD Class 8 officers were now integrated into the one ASO Class 6 classification;

3. DROs now needed to be given duties commensurate with their ASO 6 salary;

4. promotion prospects for Divisional Clerks were affected by a widening of the gap between their classification (CLAD Class 4 and now ASO level 3) and the DROs' classification (previously CLAD Class 7 and now ASO level 6); and

5. relativities had disappeared between DROs and the old CLAD Class 8 officers heading the Industrial Relations teams in Head Offices with the result that the latter positions had become less attractive.

3.45   Aside from an increased salary bill resulting from the broad-banding of various classifications the AEC had debits imposed on it by the Department of Finance. These resulted from savings attributable to the Integrated Office Structure and service-wide efficiency scrutinies. The specific savings required by the Department of Finance totalled $650,000 and included:

.   reduced higher duties allowance (HDA) - $191,000;

.   savings on HDA administration - $31,000;

.   reduced RSI costs - $59,000;

.   reduced promotions processes and more efficient classification processes - $78,000;

.   job redesign - $250,000; and

.   reduced turnover - $42,000.

3.46   In addition, to the $650,000 another $250,000 was required for a 1.25% efficiency dividend recommended by the Efficiency Scrutiny Unit and another $45,000 for an accounts efficiency scrutiny recommended by the Unit. These anticipated savings amounted to $980,000 in 1988/89.

3.47   The AEC's submission indicated options that had been identified to 'meet in whole, or in part, the changed circumstances of the Commission.'[18] The options were to:

1. seek declassification of DROs from ASO 6 to ASO 5;

2. obtain additional salary funding;

3. transfer responsibilities from Area Managers to DROs so as to justify their ASO 6 classification;

4. reduce Divisional Office staffing levels to 2.5 officers per Divisional Office; and

5. use regionalisation as a means of restructuring and multi-skilling Divisional Office staff.

3.48   Options 2 and 5 were considered realistic and the AEC favoured option 5, regionalisation.

3.49   In canvassing the regionalisation option the AEC stated that:

1. understaffing continued to be a problem in Divisional Offices but it was more a result of an inflexible system which did not allow the effective deployment of personnel;

2. the workload faced by DROs continued to be severe. The submission pointed to instances of eight DROs going on sick leave in the run-up to the 1987 federal election as an indication of the stressful nature of their work;

3. communications to and from Divisional Offices were limited to the telephone, courier services and the postal service;

4. excessive amounts of overtime were worked in Divisional Offices during election periods and those times when habitation reviews were conducted;

5. the risk of error in the existing system was too high; and

6. there was a general frustration with the existing system exhibited by a tense climate of industrial relations.

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18. Minutes of Evidence, p. 19.

3.50   The AEC submission also provided counter arguments to arguments put forward by those in favour of retaining Divisional Offices.

3.51   First, proponents of Divisional Offices argued that the existence of Divisional Offices maximised local employment by the need for three permanent staff and the employment of casual assistants at election time. However, the AEC did not see that it had a role to provide local employment and indicated anticipated measures likely to reduce the need for local employment.

3.52   Second, it was argued Divisional Offices maximised proximity to electors which was to their greater benefit and convenience. The AEC responded that surveys of public knowledge of Divisional Offices did not support this argument. What was important was an effective and efficient process which the AEC argued could be better achieved using larger offices.

3.53   Third, the proponents of Divisional Offices believed Divisional Offices maximised officers' local knowledge which was important for the administration of elections and roll maintenance. The AEC responded to this by pointing out that local knowledge could be totally lost if it was all contained in one DRO's head and cited difficulties that occurred during the 1987 federal election when eight DROs went on sick leave in the lead-up to the election. The Electoral Commissioner later noted that the sudden loss of DROs and Divisional Clerks had been catastrophic.[19]

3.54   The AEC did not see that local knowledge could be achieved only through officers living in the one Division for a long time. Rather there were a variety of ways of obtaining local knowledge. It was simply important that officers, wherever they were based, got out and about and learnt about electorates.

3.55   The AEC argued that in general:

> ... the larger Regional Office [would] provide both a more effective instrument for the administration of elections and roll maintenance and a more stimulating and rewarding environment for its officers. In the present economic climate, and for the immediately foreseeable future, it would provide a basis for introducing computer facilities so much more cost-effective that it would be difficult to argue for provision of such facilities under the present Divisional Office alternative. And, to deal with the immediate difficulties occasioned by the *Office Structures Review*, it offers a solution that is much to be preferred to all other identified options.[20]

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19. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 33, 186.
20. Minutes of Evidence, p. 44.

3.56   The AEC's submission presented a new staffing model similar to those which appeared in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report. This new model was based on a premise that the optimum number of Divisions per region was five and that the maximum should not exceed six. However, in some rural regions subordinate offices would be maintained. An important difference between this model and its predecessors was the existence of an ASO 7 officer to manage the larger regions.

3.57   Table 3.2 shows the model for regions comprising two to six Divisions. Table 3.3 shows the allocation of staff in a (5-Division) Regional Office. The AEC's final proposed Regional Office structure is presented as Appendix E.

Table 3.2. Revised Regional Office Model

| | Number of Divisions: | | | | |
Officer Classification	2	3	4	5	6
ASO 7				1	1
ASO 6	1	1	1	2	2
ASO 5	1	2	2	2	2
ASO 4			1	1	1
ASO 3	1	1	1	1	2
ASO 2	2	3	3	3	4
ASO 1	1	1	2	2	2
Total staff	6	8	10	12	14

Note: 1. ASO = Administrative Service Officer. There are eight levels of ASO.
       2. Some regions are to have smaller satellite (outposted) offices. AEC proposals for satellite offices are shown in Appendices D and E.

Source: *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 35.

Table 3.3 Allocation of Staff in a 5-Division Regional Office

Function	Allocation of staff: Number of staff	Officer x Classification Level
1. Electoral preparation and associated programs	2 x ASO 6	1 x ASO 2
2. Roll maintenance	1 x ASO 5 1 x ASO 3 2 x ASO 2 1 x ASO 1	
3. Information and electoral education	1 x ASO 5	
4. Administration	1 x ASO 4 1 x ASO 1	
5. Regional Manager	1 x ASO 7	

Note: ASO = Administrative Service Officer. There are eight
levels of ASO.

Source: Minutes of Evidence, pp. 34-35.

3.58   Staff in Regional Offices would be allocated according
to the highest function but would have other duties as well.
Satellite offices would be staffed by an ASO 5 and ASO 2 officer
and be responsible to the Regional Manager in the relevant
Regional Office. Satellite offices would be responsible for only
roll maintenance and election preparation. Appendices D and E
show proposals for the location of satellite offices.

3.59   The AEC's submission contained an alternative
regionalisation scheme to that presented in the Efficiency
Scrutiny Report. This scheme is Appendix D. The AEC noted that it
did not necessarily consider the combinations of Divisions in the
Efficiency Scrutiny Report to be `... the only, or the best
possibilities'. Furthermore, the AEC's senior managers regarded
the alternative scheme as preferable to the scheme contained in
the Efficiency Scrutiny Report. The Report stated that:

> Were regionalisation to receive the necessary
> endorsements to enable the Commission to
> proceed to implementation, it would be
> preferable in the first instance to identify
> certain general principles that lay down
> parameters to be applied in the grouping of
> Divisions and then apply those parameters,
> rather than devise a particular set of
> boundaries ad hoc and follow those without
> regard to general considerations.[21]

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21. Minutes of Evidence, p. 35.

Other Views

3.60   While the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and the AEC's
submissions argued for regionalisation other submissions and
evidence received by the Committee showed widespread scepticism
about regionalisation and its alleged benefits. Criticism on
regionalisation and the Efficiency Scrutiny Report came from the
ACOA, DROs, local councils, Members of Parliament and major
political parties.

The ACOA

3.61   The ACOA's submission was highly critical of the
Efficiency Scrutiny and its Report. Some of the criticisms were
that:

- the Scrutiny failed to adequately calculate the
  staffing requirements of the proposed Regional
  Offices (and hence estimated `savings' were
  inaccurate);

- the Scrutiny Report focused on maintenance
  functions and failed to cover adequately election
  staffing issues;

- the Scrutiny was too narrow and should have
  encompassed other areas such as the integration of
  State/Commonwealth electoral responsibilities;

- the Scrutiny did not properly address its terms of
  reference with the Scrutiny Report consisting
  mainly of opinions and assumptions;

- the Scrutiny Report did not include all submissions
  and quoted selectively from submissions;

- the recommendations in the Scrutiny Report were
  based on information contained in the 1974 Scott
  Report and the AEC's 1985 review of Divisional
  Offices with the Scott Report seen to be of little
  value given the time between its preparation and
  the present day;

- the Scrutiny Report did not substantiate the ways
  in which its various regionalisation options were
  reached and in particular, `responsibilities and
  levels of officers, duty statements and the
  organisational structure of a Regional Office were
  not examined in detail;

- the Scrutiny failed to consider the status quo as an option;

- the Scrutiny Report presented set-up costs for Divisional Offices which were grossly overstated; and

- the Scrutiny Report glossed over issues such as career structure and job satisfaction.

3.62   The ACOA stated that the prospect of regionalisation had had an adverse effect on staff morale because it would lead to the redundancy of some of Divisional Office staff. Also regionalisation would affect local knowledge adversely and would lead to a decline in service to electors. For example, elderly people would have greater difficulty making personal contact with the AEC and Members of Parliament would be deprived of information and service and may face more electoral complaints previously directed to DROs.

3.63   Overall the ACOA found the Efficiency Scrutiny Report to be a document that sought `to reach a perceived "devised result" ' and because of its `inaccuracies and omissions' the ACOA doubted its credibility. The ACOA saw that regionalisation might be seen as a panacea for existing problems but noted the existing system was `basically proven and effective'.[22]

3.64   Subsequent to the AEC's submission being authorised for publication on 18 March 1988 the ACOA wrote to the Committee advising that it had a number of concerns about the AEC's new stance on regionalisation. The fact that the AEC's submission sought to justify regionalisation on the basis of changed circumstances resulting from the Second Tier Wage Agreement raised the ire of the ACOA. The ACOA believed the AEC was now using stealth to introduce regionalisation. It was the view of the ACOA that the AEC should confine its arguments to the terms of reference set by the Efficiency Scrutiny and that it was improper to introduce the effects of the Second Tier Agreement into the consideration of regionalisation. Such effects and the implementation of the Agreement were to be dealt with in a separate forum. The ACOA indicated that the AEC had had its chance to raise concerns about the effects of the Agreement and concluded:

> ACOA will not support any claim that deliberately undermines the conditions of employment matters of its membership, nor will ACOA co-operate in any introduction of Regionalisation.

> The Commission should dispel any naive belief that ACOA will as stated in the [AEC] submission agree to implement Regionalisation in a co-operative partnership.

> If Regionalisation proceeds there will be major industrial disputation.[23]

Divisional Returning Officers

3.65   The Committee received submissions from several DROs and heard evidence from DROs at the public hearing held on 11 May 1988.

3.66   The general view conveyed by DROs was that they were happy with the existing Divisional Office structure and did not see that regionalisation would benefit them or improve the operation of the AEC.

3.67   While the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and the AEC's submission argued that regionalisation would provide Divisional Office staff with a better career structure DROs appeared unconvinced and indicated to the Committee that they were happy with the current arrangement.

3.68   There was a similar difference of opinion between the AEC and its DROs as to the best way to acquire local knowledge. DROs indicated that the importance of local knowledge was often underestimated, that it was indispensable and that it was best gained by living in a local area.

3.69   While some DROs argued that service to electors and service to Members of Parliament would suffer as a result of regionalisation there were those who agreed with the AEC view that the existing Divisional Offices received little personal contact from the public during non-election periods. These DROs did not think this would change if regionalisation was introduced. However, they believed that at election times there would be a big demand for personal contact and for this reason said that Divisional Offices were needed.

Local Councils

3.70   The Committee received numerous submissions from local councils and heard evidence from representatives of the Narrandera Shire Council at the public hearing held on 11 May 1988.

3.71   In general, submissions from local councils expressed concerns about specific proposals contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and the resulting detrimental effects that would occur in their area. The main issue of concern was service to electors although many councils believed the closure of some

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22. Minutes of Evidence, p. 402.

23. Minutes of Evidence, p. 469.

Divisional Offices resulting from regionalisation would lead to inefficiencies. Councils were concerned that the closure of Divisional Offices would cause hardship with electors having to travel greater distances to make simple inquiries.

3.72   Various councils noted that they had benefited from having a Divisional Office in their area. In particular, councils had used their local Divisional Office to get updates for lists of voters for local government elections.

3.73   The Committee noted that the issue of local employment was important to all local councils. Some council submissions were quite explicit on this matter but most simply implied the concern.

Members of Parliament

3.74   Fifteen Members and Senators of the Commonwealth Parliament made submissions to the Committee on the AEC's regionalisation proposals and eight Members appeared before the Committee at public hearings held on 10 May and 23 May 1988.

3.75   In general, Members rejected the regionalisation proposals contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report. No submission indicated support for regionalisation, however, submissions from National Party members noted there may be arguments for regionalising Divisional Offices in densely populated regions such as Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong.[24]

3.76   Most Members' submissions identified particular problems that would occur within their own electorates should the regionalisation proposals contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report be implemented. The issues of local knowledge and service to electors were of particular concern. Several submissions noted that regionalisation would make access to AEC offices difficult. For example, the Member for Hinkler, Mr Brian Courtice, MP, noted that the regionalisation proposal to close the Bundaberg Divisional Office and to replace it with an office in Rockhampton was the same (in terms of travel time and distance) as moving the office to Brisbane.[25]

3.77   The regionalisation proposals were seen to create particular problems in the electorates of Macarthur, Riverina-Darling, Cowper and Braddon.

3.78   In evidence, some Members were prepared to concede there may be benefits from regionalisation in particular areas (namely metropolitan areas) but they did not agree with the specific proposals contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report.

Of particular concern was the approach of using regionalisation to centralise the AEC's operations at the expense of regional or provincial areas.[26]

3.79   The Member for Braddon, Mr Chris Miles, MP, noted that the computerisation proposed to occur with regionalisation should give greater scope for decentralisation rather than centralisation.[27]

3.80   The general view of Members was that the regionalisation proposal would have to be substantially revised before it was acceptable to them. The Committee noted the views of the Member for Gwydir, the Hon. Ralph Hunt, MP, who concluded his submission stating:

> ... if the Government proceeds to implement regionalisation of Divisional Returning Offices in country areas throughout Australia, where distances are great and communication difficult, there will be a fierce campaign launched to restore an equitable, efficient and localised Divisional Returning Office structure similar to that which is in existence today.[28]

Major Political Parties

3.81   Three submissions were received from major political parties. They were a submission from the Gwydir Electorate Council of the National Party of Australia, a submission from the Rt Hon. Ian Sinclair, MP on behalf of the Parliamentary National Party and a joint submission from the Liberal and National Parties.

3.82   The submissions from the Gwydir Electorate Council and the Rt Hon. Ian Sinclair, MP expressed strong opposition to any regionalisation of rural Divisional Offices. However, the latter submission noted that `... there may be arguments for regionalising electoral offices in dense population regions in the State capitals.'[29]

3.83   The joint submission from the Liberal and National Parties was critical of the Efficiency Scrutiny and the Scrutiny Report. The criticisms made by the Liberal and National Parties included:

•   the terms of reference for the Efficiency Scrutiny were narrowly drawn precluding the consideration of wider matters relating to the efficiency and operation of the AEC;

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24. Minutes of Evidence, p. S58.
25. Minutes of Evidence, p. S590.

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26. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 303-324.
27. Minutes of Evidence, p. 80.
28. Minutes of Evidence, p. S60.
29. Minutes of Evidence, p. S445.

- the Scrutiny while dealing with a difficult subject was completed within a very limited period of time;

- the methodology for the Scrutiny limited the Scrutineer to seeking the views of AEC staff and staff associations. The views of voters and politicians were not sought; and

- the Scrutiny Report noted the dependence of regionalisation on computerisation; but computerisation was an issue to be addressed separately.

3.84   The Liberal and National Parties declared their opposition to any of the options for regionalisation stating that the Scrutiny Report was unconvincing in making a case for regionalisation. Nor did the Report provide adequate reasons for change. It presented evidence which was inconclusive and there was some doubt about the predicted benefits.

3.85   The Liberal and National Parties also noted the Scrutiny Report understated the value of local knowledge acquired through the Divisional Office structure and that regionalisation would have little impact on major cost items in an election.

MAJOR ISSUES

- Local Knowledge
- Education
- Service to Electors
- Staff Issues
- Computerisation
- Integrated Office Structure
- Maintenance and Provision of Electoral Rolls
- The Efficiency Scrutiny and Scrutiny Report

Local Knowledge

4.1   Local knowledge in the AEC context refers to knowledge of a Commonwealth Electoral Division: its size, geography, demographic characteristics and electoral characteristics. Local knowledge is important for the effective preparation for and administration of elections and electoral roll maintenance.

4.2   The Committee found there to be agreement amongst most witnesses that local knowledge was important. However, an exception was the Scrutineer who believed the importance of local knowledge had been overrated. She stated `... the importance is inflated by the same extent as the currency of Brazil.'[1]

4.3   There were two views on the best means of acquiring local knowledge. The first, put forward by the supporters of the existing Divisional Office structure, was that local knowledge was best obtained by those who lived and worked in the Division. The reasons for this were that such officers had direct exposure to the Division and therefore could best acquire knowledge about it. This exposure was not limited to work related activities. It extended to social activities and other personal pursuits within the Division.

4.4   The view that local knowledge was best obtained through a Divisional Office was presented to the Committee by numerous DROs. For example, a submission from the DRO for the Division of Riverina-Darling stated:

>   Local knowledge plays a most important part in the effectiveness of a Divisional Office. It is an indispensable tool, often underestimated.
>
>   Page 15 [of the Efficiency Scrutiny Report] discusses local knowledge which, by definition, is knowledge about an area gained or acquired only by living in the area. It is not a series of facts gathered by study, research or reading.

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1. Minutes of Evidence, p. 612.

For example, one can learn from the telephone directory that a certain Government Department or type of business exists within a locality. However it is only local knowledge that enables one to know the most helpful and efficient person within that Government Department or business.

Moving a Divisional office, especially from a Division such as this [Riverina-Darling] to almost a 100 kilometres outside its borders, will result in new staff not having local knowledge.[2]

4.5   The second view, was that local knowledge could be obtained in a variety of ways and in particular, that it could be obtained by officers who did not live or work in a particular Division. For example, in the proposed Regional Office, selected staff would have responsibility for one or more Divisions and, funds permitting, they would be provided with a car to get out and about.

4.6   The AEC argued that while the local knowledge of some DROs was excellent there were various instances where DROs had failed to acquire local knowledge and/or to make the best use of it. The Electoral Commissioner cited an example from the 1987 election:

    ... we had bad queuing in an inner division, the explanation of investigation was that the divisional returning officer was not aware that a large number of Greeks who vote very quickly ... had moved on and been replaced by Vietnamese. I do not know at what level one assesses local knowledge if you have not noticed that you have lost 3,000 Greeks and acquired 3,000 Vietnamese since the last election.[3]

4.7   The Electoral Commissioner believed local knowledge was 'tremendously valuable and staff ought to have it' but the existing and past arrangements of Divisional Offices were no guarantee of local knowledge.[4] For example, should a DRO go on sick leave then local knowledge may disappear. The Commissioner stated:

    I believe that better management, closer to the scene, and better controls are more likely to produce useful local knowledge and will see that it is applied in the situations where it is required ...

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2. Minutes of Evidence, p. S18.
3. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 194-195.
4. Minutes of Evidence, p. 203.

In may ways the critical thing is whether there is some iron limit as to the amount of local knowledge one head can hold. The implication of the traditional argument is that you could learn about 70,000 electors or a block of territory this size, but it would be too much to learn if they were looking at 280,000 or 350,000 electors. I do not think that is really the case. What you need to know are, certain critical factors - the demographic trends, the ethnographic composition of the electorate, where the tricky boundaries are, where there are problems recruiting polling officials. It is certainly not a pool of information that is beyond the capacity of one small head to hold. I believe that in the better management environment of a larger officer the pool of information would be better ...

Having a good manager looking over the shoulders of 148-equivalent people is probably the best way of getting effective command of local knowledge. As it stands at the moment, managing small offices as decentralised and as remote from control as these are is the real problem.[5]

Education

4.8   Following amendments to the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 in 1983 and the high informal vote in the 1984 federal election the AEC gave greater priority to electoral education. Part of this role is carried out by DROs. In 1984 DRO positions were reclassified on the basis that their duties would include visits to schools.

4.9   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report noted that some staff were concerned about the effect regionalisation might have on electoral education programs for schools. In essence the concern was that officers responsible for electoral education in proposed Regional Offices would be too far removed from schools to effectively carry out visits. The Report rejected this view arguing location was not important and that a regional structure would permit the devolution of resources from AEC Head Offices to Regional Offices and the appointment of a specialist to look after electoral education.

4.10   The Committee found there to be considerable variation in the number of school visits already being undertaken by DROs. Some States placed greater emphasis on this work, for example, in the period January 1987 - March 1988 only 21 out of the 53 DROs in NSW made school visits whereas all DROs in Victoria had conducted two visits.[6] While this appeared alarming it was noted

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5. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 203-204.
6. Minutes of Evidence, p. S1209.

that other factors had an effect. For example, in Victorian schools politics was an examinable subject.[7] Also, it was noted school visits in most States had begun to increase during the first quarter of 1988 as a result of a national advertising campaign.

4.11   In examining effects of regionalisation, the Committee noted that Regional Offices were to have a special educational role. The Committee viewed this change favourably but had a particular concern about the work to be undertaken by staff in the proposed Regional Offices. In the AEC's Regional Office model an officer was allocated to the function of information and electoral education. But it was intended that this officer would perform a range of other duties. It appeared the AEC was proposing one thing on paper and planning to do another in practice.

4.12   The AEC's response to this was to state first, that the officer responsible for electoral education would be given backup by means of material prepared by the AEC's Central Office. This material could be distributed within the existing budget allocation. Second, the AEC was looking at having more funds allocated for travel which would ensure access to schools. However, it was possible some schools would be happy just to take resource material without a visit from an AEC officer.

4.13   The AEC was unable to say what amount of time a designated education officer would devote to electoral education and added that this was a matter to be discussed with unions.

4.14   Whilst the Committee considered the AEC's proposal that Regional Offices have an educational role to be important in principle, the Committee could obtain little information from the AEC about the practicalities of the arrangement. The Committee noted the remarks of the Electoral Commissioner:

> In fairness to the Committee, all that we can say is that we will have a product which we will think well of and which we will try to peddle as hard as we can with the consumers, to wit, the schools. The difficulty with saying what that market is going to be like is that the curriculum potential, except in Victoria, has been quite limited to this time. We have certainly been attacking the curriculum problem through setting up curriculum networks and having conferences here. We would hope that that tide will turn and that there will be an increasing demand both for the provision of sessions by our own

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7. At the Year 11 and 12 level separate politics courses are offered in Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and in some colleges in the Australian Capital Territory. Politics/government issues are also covered to some degree in all States and Territories in subjects such as Social Studies, Legal Studies, History and Economics.

field staff and for the adoption of material. But it is very early days to have any certainty as to how much of our direct teaching output, if you want to put it in those terms, can be sold outside Victoria.[8]

Service to Electors

4.15   The issue of service to electors relates mainly to the location of Divisional Offices and the opportunity they provide for face-to-face contact with voters. The Efficiency Scrutiny Report noted a concern that regionalisation would reduce the number of Divisional Offices and thereby reduce the opportunity for face-to-face inquiries.

4.16   Submissions to the Committee and evidence received from a range of witnesses expressed the view that regionalisation would adversely affect service to electors. For example, various Members of the House of Representatives indicated regionalisation would involve the closure of specific Divisional Offices and that as a result voters would have to travel great distances to make simple inquiries.

4.17   Both the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and the AEC's submission argued that most public contact with the AEC and in particular, its Divisional Offices was by either telephone or mail. Moreover, in a non-election period most Divisional Offices had no more than 10 to 15 in person inquiries per week. This level of activity was illustrated by the Scrutineer:

> If you go around the divisional offices to talk to staff about something, it is most unusual for somebody to come into the office. They are often there to pay the electricity bill anyway - they have mistaken us for the electricity commission. In fact, we had the official opening of the new office for the division of McEwen when the new division was set up, and we were all there with Lady McEwen and various members to have the official opening ceremony, and a gentleman walked in saying, 'Is this where I pay the electricity bill?'![9]

4.18   The AEC believed that most telephone and mail inquiries would be unaffected by regionalisation and in cases where there was disadvantage there were remedies. For example, greater use could be made of facilities such as 008 telephone services in rural areas.

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8. Minutes of Evidence, p. 233.
9. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 627-628.

4.19   However, the AEC did not deny that in some areas there
would be cases where voters had to travel further to make an
inquiry.   The Committee noted that there was no evidence to
suggest voters travelled long distances now to make inquiries.

4.20   In rural areas the problem of distance might be
alleviated   by satellite offices or the retention of some
Divisional Offices but in metropolitan areas voters would simply
have to put up with the extra distance, the consolation being
that it would not be a significantly greater distance to travel.

4.21   Also of concern to the Committee was the level of
service   provided to electors during election periods. The
Efficiency Scrutiny Report suggested that where Divisions did not
have a Divisional Office the AEC might make use of premises owned
by other government organisations.

4.22   The AEC indicated to the Committee that the use of
local government offices, post offices and other similar offices
would be an acceptable approach for providing voters with
pre-poll voting facilities. The distribution of such facilities
would vary and reflect population movement at the time of an
election. It would be a matter of `horses for courses'.[10]

4.23   The   criteria used for establishing postal voting
centres   would start with `an absolute population size, a
strategic location and perhaps a seasonal location'.[11]

4.24   The Committee identified the availability of voting
centres as a major test of the regionalisation proposal. If the
AEC could not give an indication that these centres would be
distributed   liberally   outside   metropolitan   areas   then
regionalisation would be open to strong criticism. To this the
Electoral Commissioner responded:

          ... we would have no hesitation in saying
          that   any country centre which presently
          contains a divisional office could have a
          postal voting centre for [an election] period
          without any difficulty, and that with the
          sorts of numbers over and above that we would
          continue the rate of growth that has been
          going on, because it has been an expanding
          facility over the last couple of elections.[12]

4.25   Despite the AEC's willingness to establish additional
offices and/or voting centres during an election period it was
known accommodation would be a problem. The AEC acknowledged that
it had difficulties obtaining good long-term lease accommodation
for its existing Divisional Offices. This would be exacerbated
during an election period when (under regionalisation) the AEC
would require well located short-term accommodation.

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10. Minutes of Evidence, p. 216.
11. Minutes of Evidence, p. 217.
12. Minutes of Evidence, p. 218.

4.26   An unfortunate fact of life was that the AEC did not
attract many customers to its offices and therefore landlords
were reluctant to lease good accommodation to the AEC.

4.27   At a more positive level it was indicated to the
Committee that talks were taking place with Australia Post with a
view to the AEC being able to set up some form of facility in
post offices during election periods. If the AEC could negotiate
an agreement with Australia Post it would have a great deal of
flexibility in decentralising its services.

Staff Issues

4.28   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report recorded that staff had
widely differing views about the existing Divisional Office
structure. Some were very happy with the structure and enjoyed
working in small units whereas others found the environment
isolating and limiting in terms of career opportunities. The tone
of   the   Efficiency   Scrutiny Report   suggested there   was
dissatisfaction with the existing structure and consequently an
adverse effect on morale. The Report concluded:

          ... it is significant that the disadvantages
          of Divisional Offices mentioned today are
          much the same as those noted by the Scott
          Report in 1974. There is no evidence to
          suggest that staff dedication and   job
          satisfaction can only be achieved in a
          Divisional Office structure and would be
          necessarily lost in another structure.[13]

4.29   The Committee noted problems identified by the
Efficiency Scrutiny Report and the AEC with regard to staff
morale in the existing Divisional Office structure but also noted
many DROs were still very happy with the current structure and
wanted no change. For example, the DRO for Maribyrnong, Mr Frank
Vassallo, told the Committee:

          I have found from experience - admittedly
          only electoral; but it has been vast
          experience both in the administration as well
          as in the divisional office - that the
          position that suited me the best, the
          position I got the most out of, that I
          enjoyed the most, was the position of
          divisional returning officer. I cannot accept
          that someone else can tell me that I am not
          happy in my job, that I need a further career
          structure to advance myself. I have already
          done that and I have said, `Thank you, but I
          am happy where I am'. As for working between

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13. AEC, Volume 1 - Report, p. 13.

elections and how boring it might be, I do not find it boring. We have a very responsible job in maintaining the rolls, in public education and all the rest of it. There is plenty of work for us to do and work which is extremely satisfying.[14]

4.30   The Committee also noted evidence from the Electoral Commissioner to the effect that the existing Divisional Office structure suited some officers but did not necessarily benefit the AEC. In particular, the Commissioner advised there was a trend of DROs starting their careers in rural divisions (recognised as the hardest) and moving to coastal areas. Also, there was 'a discernible pattern of movement from marginal seats into safe seats', the safe seat being the easier of the two to manage.[15]

4.31   The Committee recognised staff morale was affected by the prospect of regionalisation because, in combination with computerisation and the consequent elimination of repetitive tasks, regionalisation would lead to some reduction in the number of jobs. Additionally, staff were concerned about the prospect of having to relocate and travel greater distances to work and the nature of the new environment.[16]

4.32   At the public hearing held on 6 April 1988 the Electoral Commissioner indicated that up to 80 or 90 Divisional Office positions would be under threat of being abolished with regionalisation. However, of these some 35 to 40 were unoccupied. Therefore the problem of job loss would affect approximately 35-50 people.

4.33   In the event the AEC wished to restructure it would follow a standard procedure and consult with the ACOA. The Public Service Commission and the Department of Industrial Relations would be advised of any expected redundancies. Should this situation arise surplus staff would be given the option of moving elsewhere in the Public Service, transferring to other jobs within the AEC or, by consent, taking a voluntary reduction in pay. If these steps did not work then some officers might be declared redundant in which case funds would be sought for redundancy packages. Redundant officers would be given a maximum of 12 months notice of such action.

4.34   On the subject of job loss and reployment the ACOA indicated to the Committee that it would not allow its members to be disadvantaged as a result of regionalisation. The ACOA made it quiet clear that it rejected 'the principle of regionalisation in its current form'.[17] Furthermore, any attempt to proceed with

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14. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 512-513.
15. Minutes of Evidence, p. 768.
16. AEC, Volume One - Report, p. 18.
17. Minutes of Evidence, p. 519.

regionalisation would meet with major industrial disputation. The Committee also noted an earlier statement made by the ACOA that if regionalisation proceeded it would be followed by 'massive resignations'.[18]

4.35   It was clear that in the short term some AEC officers would not enjoy enhanced career prospects from regionalisation but the proposed Regional Office structure had the potential to provide a greater variety of jobs and job classifications than the existing Divisional Office structure.

Computerisation

4.36   The attempts of the AEC to acquire appropriate modern computer facilities are a sorry tale.

4.37   As far back as 1983/84 the then Australian Electoral Office obtained in-principle approval from the Government to establish an online electoral roll system. Funds were provided for consultants to develop an ADP strategy and in January 1984 the consultant firm Price Waterhouse Associates Pty Ltd finalised a report ('Australian Electoral Office - Report on ADP Strategy') which recommended the introduction of new computer systems and equipment as a matter of priority.

4.38   In 1984/85 funds were provided for the design of new systems and the development of an implementation strategy. The consultant firm Computer Sciences of Australia Pty Ltd conducted this work and presented a report ('The 1985 ADP Strategic Plan for the Australian Electoral Commission') to the AEC which, like the Price Waterhouse Report, recommended appropriate action as a matter of priority.

4.39   During 1985 various requests were made to the Special Minister of State that he take the AEC's proposals forward to Cabinet for consideration. But, for budgetary reasons and doubts about claimed savings associated with the implementation strategy, these requests were unsuccessful.[19]

4.40   By late 1985 the AEC's needs were being considered in the context of the Department of the Special Minister of State and in November 1985 the AEC was advised by the Secretary to the Department that it could be well into 1986 before the Government [took] decisions on major new proposals'.[20]

4.41   In 1986/87 the AEC was occupied with maintaining and developing its existing systems and acquiring computer hardware to replace antiquated equipment.

4.42   Today the AEC's computerised systems are operated on numerous types of computers owned by the AEC, the Department of Administrative Services, CSIRONET and the South Australian Government Computing Centre. Many aspects of the AEC's computer

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18. Minutes of Evidence, p. 503.
19. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 76-77.
20. Minutes of Evidence, p. 78.

systems are unsatisfactory, for example, the AEC's election night system cannot cope with the volume of data associated with Senate results and some basic processes are not even computerised.

4.43   The AEC personnel and finance systems use manual methods and are slow in providing management information. The Electoral Commissioner illustrated the slowness of the personnel system when he explained to the Committee that to answer a request about DRO absentee rates would require him to write to each of the States saying:

> Kindly put a clerk onto examining each of the personnel record cards that are maintained and tot up the number of entries relating to absences and try to give it to us in a month's time if you possibly can.[21]

4.44   The lack of appropriate computer equipment is also shown by Divisional Offices. Except in the case of South Australia, Divisional Offices have no access to office automation. The equipment in Divisional Offices includes: `a photocopier, microfiche readers, one or more typewriters and telephones'.[22] The need for modern computer technology in the AEC is also shown by the fact that several DROs have purchased microcomputers with their own money for use in Divisional Offices.[23]

4.45   The Efficiency Scrutiny Report argued that regionalisation was viable only if it involved computerisation. The Report stated the computerisation needs of Divisional Offices and described specific items of computer equipment that would be required in a Regional Office structure.

4.46   The Report argued that an online computer system was required and could be achieved by:

> .   providing computer facilities to all Divisional Offices (but this would be expensive); or
>
> .   introducing regionalisation in metropolitan areas and some rural areas and providing computer facilities to all offices; or
>
> .   introducing regionalisation to all metropolitan and rural areas and providing computer facilities to all offices. (This last option was said to be the least expensive).

4.47   As noted in Chapter 3 the AEC subsequently argued for regionalisation on different grounds. Regionalisation was seen to stand alone as an effective means of containing costs while computerisation remained `very highly desirable' but not

necessarily essential.[24] Commenting on the change in circumstances facing the AEC the Electoral Commissioner commented:

> We were arguing that better administration required computerisation. What we would now say is that computerisation remains very desirable and that the evidence that has come out of the post-mortem of the 1987 election suggests that it is even more desirable than we thought at the beginning of the exercise to maintain quality control, but there are more pressing problems that are occasioned by this financial squeeze that we find ourselves in.
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> ...   The justification in the Saunders [Efficiency Scrutiny] report is reducing the number of points into which computerised facilities can be inserted. What we now say is that even if computers were not available, even if computers did not exist, we would need to alter our staffing arrangements drastically to pay the salary bill with our present amount of money, or alternatively we would have to have more money to pay our present salary bill. We would like to have computerisation. We believe it is highly desirable, but the issue of bringing offices together no longer turns on that; it turns on the more immediate problem of the impact of the office structures review and agreement.[25]

4.48   The ACOA was highly critical of the new approach adopted by the AEC. The ACOA believed the AEC had been provided with adequate opportunities to put its concerns about its ability to cope with the effects of the Second Tier Wage Agreement and the related 4% wage claim. Moreover, the ACOA saw that the AEC was confusing an industrial matter with an entirely separate review and noted that the Efficiency Scrutiny's terms of reference made no mention of the Second Tier Wage Agreement.[26]

4.49   The Committee was concerned about various aspects of the AEC's proposals. At a general level the Committee questioned the overall approach of the AEC in seeking regionalisation and computerisation. The facts presented to the Committee showed an organisation in need of modern computer technology and computer systems. It appeared that irrespective of regionalisation the AEC had no choice but to pursue computerisation in a comprehensive manner. Despite the proposals contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report the overall approach appeared piecemeal.

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21. Minutes of Evidence, p. 771.
22. AEC, Corporate Information Technology Plan, June 1988, p. 9.
23. AEC, Volume One - Report, p. 50.

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24. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 238, 259.
25. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 175-176.
26. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 468-469.

4.50   At a more specific level the Committee questioned costings and estimates of the equipment requirements contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report. (Similar questions were also raised by the Department of Finance, various DROs and the ACOA).

4.51   The Report's proposals contained references to specific items of computer equipment and how they could be used. However, the Committee was unable to satisfy itself as to whether the items represented the best choice in terms of cost or storage capacity. The AEC's willingness to refer to specific items rather than talk in terms of general needs seemed to imply a desire to keep adding to existing equipment rather than to approach Government with a major computer system re-equipment and/or redevelopment proposal. The Committee observed that this latter approach had been adopted by the Australian Taxation Office and it had received the support of the Government.

4.52   The Committee noted comments by the Scrutineer that the AEC would look at what equipment was available at a later time if the Committee gave its approval to the proposal.

4.53   The Committee also noted that the regionalisation proposal would lead to reductions in the number of clerical staff, however, the Committee doubted computerisation could be accomplished without an increase in the number of staff. The Committee was aware of Commonwealth departments which had embarked on major computer re-equipment programs justifying them on the basis of projected staff savings and then only to find their staff numbers increase.

4.54   The Electoral Commissioner agreed that this did occur and undertook to provide the Committee with estimates of the additional staff required for computerisation at the Divisional/Regional level. Table 4.1 shows the additional staff required.

Table 4.1   Numbers of Additional ADP Staff required on Computerisation at the Divisional/Regional Level.

Office	Number of staff: Based on Divisions	Based on Regions
Sydney	3	2
Melbourne	2	1
Brisbane	2	1
Adelaide	1	1
Perth	1	1
Hobart	1	0
Darwin	0	0
Canberra	+3	+3
	+2	+2
Each Division/ Regional Office	.2 (=29.6)	.5(=22.8)
	44.6	33.8

Source: AEC (Minutes of Evidence, p. S1232)

Integrated Office Structure

4.55   The 'Second Tier' Wage Agreement reached between the Government and the ACOA and APSA provided for the introduction of a new 8-tier classification structure to replace some 120 pre-existing classifications in the Australian Public Service (APS). The new structure, the Integrated Office Structure, sought to rationalise the extreme number of old classifications into classifications which would be suitable for a modern office. The Structure was intended to provide quantifiable savings through:

.   the more flexible deployment of staff in redesigned jobs;

.   staff being multi-skilled and more adaptable to emerging circumstances;

.   the redesign of jobs and re-organisation of work;

.   reduced staff movements and associated administrative costs; and

.   a reduction in the incidence of RSI in the APS.[27]

4.56   The Integrated Office Structure presented the AEC with several problems. (See Chapter 3, page 24). Various old classifications were broadbanded to form new classifications with higher salary scales and certain anomalies were created by the fact that broadbanding of some classifications put supervisors and their subordinates into the one classification.

4.57   The AEC's submission detailed the problems which were created for it by the implementation of the Integrated Office Structure and presented five options for resolving its difficulties, viz.:

1. declassify DROs from the ASO 6 to ASO 5 level;

2. obtain additional salary funding;

3. transfer responsibilities from Area Managers to DROs so as to justify their new ASO 6 classification;

4. reduce overall Divisional Office staffing levels; and

5. use regionalisation as a means of restructuring and multi-skilling Divisional Office staff.

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27. Minutes of Evidence, p. 636.

4.58   As noted in Chapter 3 the AEC favoured option 5, regionalisation, as a means of coping with problems resulting from the Integrated Office Structure and additional financial constraints imposed by the Department of Finance.

4.59   The Committee examined the arguments used by the AEC in selecting regionalisation and was interested in the views expressed in evidence by the Department of Finance and the Department of Industrial Relations.

4.60   The Department of Finance believed it would be in keeping with the Second Tier Agreement for the AEC to undertake restructuring which it saw as being implicit in its regionalisation proposal. The Department saw that regionalisation was not a necessary consequence of the Agreement and stated:

> ... it would be possible for the AEC to implement new work and organisational arrangements within its current divisional office structure.[28]

4.61   The Department was of the view that irrespective of regionalisation the AEC had scope to 'adjust the distribution of responsibilities and thereby alter the content and value of individual positions'.[29] Furthermore, the opportunities for change were enhanced greatly by the Integrated Office Structure.

4.62   The Department of Industrial Relations saw that there was scope for the redesign of work with the existing Divisional Office structure but believed greater redesign could occur if there was regionalisation and computerisation.[30] However, the Department believed the AEC was 'concentrating on costs rather than opportunities, and [was trying] to frame the future within the strictures of the past.'[31] The Department questioned the AEC's attitude to the broadbanding which had affected DROs in particular and which the AEC described as a de facto reclassification. The Department's submission stated:

> Against the background of the clear commitment by the unions and Government to job redesign as the basis and rationale for the integrated office structure, and the endorsement of this rationale by the [Conciliation and Arbitration] Commission, the attitude of the AEC appears out of step. It is more fruitful to examine the opportunity for job redesign at the DRO level than to define new jobs in terms of old. What is possible now (and indeed required to achieve the offsetting efficiencies), is a fundamental re-think about how work of Divisional offices is organised.

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28. Minutes of Evidence, p. 806.
29. Minutes of Evidence, p. 807.
30. Minutes of Evidence, p. 757.
31. Minutes of Evidence, p. 639.

> The opportunity is present and requires management to develop strategic approaches to and innovative ways of organising and doing work, of reducing organisational fragmentation and hierarchy and focusing on skills formation for all staff; in other words, adopting a comprehensive approach to the management of organisations and staff. Only in this way can effectiveness and productivity be further improved and benefits realised. Management needs to look at working arrangements in a global sense before addressing the design and content of individual jobs.
>
> This applies to the AEC's remarks about reclassifications, declassifications and promotion paths for the DROs and Divisional Clerks. The essential starting point is to design optimal working arrangements - classification decisions follow from this, rather than precede it.[32]

4.63   In response the AEC advised the Committee that it was looking at questions of work and job redesign in the context of a national steering committee set up in co-operation with the ACOA and APSA. The steering committee had four working parties which were looking at the four main programs of the AEC and broad questions of job redesign. The steering committee would look at specific questions of job redesign at a later stage.

4.64   The Committee found that the AEC had proceeded with its regionalisation proposals with great determination and it appeared that the AEC wished to pursue regionalisation regardless of the opportunities provided by the new Integrated Office Structure. The Committee believed the combination of computerisation and the Integrated Office Structure offered the AEC possibilities which it had not fully explored.

4.65   The AEC also argued that the Divisional structure made the AEC unique and therefore unsuited to the Integrated Office Structure. However, this view was not shared by the Department of Industrial Relations which noted:

> There are other agencies in the Service which have similarly dispersed operations ... the challenge of change may be greater in such organisations than in those where staff are co-located in larger groupings, but the opportunity for benefit is not necessarily less.[33]

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32. Minutes of Evidence, p. 637.
33. Minutes of Evidence, p. 638.

4.66   The Committee found the AEC to be unique in its organisation and in particular, in terms of the small number of staff working in Divisional Offices. Nevertheless, the Committee did not believe this was a justification for the AEC not to pursue all possible avenues to implement the Integrated Office Structure.

Maintenance and Provision of Electoral Rolls

4.67   The AEC maintains the Australian Electoral Roll in two parts, each part on a separate computer, viz.:

- the Department of Administrative Services' Amdahl mainframe for the national roll excluding South Australia; and

- the South Australian Government Computing Centre's IBM mainframe for the South Australian roll.

4.68   The AEC uses an old roll management system known as COM II to maintain the roll but is gradually implementing a new system which will continue to use mainframe processing to update enrolment files but via mini-computers in the AEC Head Office.

4.69   The current delay in updating the electoral roll and in notifying electors of changes is up to six weeks. This delay results from manual processes used at both the Divisional Office level and the variety of steps needed to transfer information to and from Divisional Offices to the Central Office and in particular, the Department of Administrative Services' Amdahl mainframe.[34]

4.70   The Committee noted that in South Australia, Divisional Offices were connected via landline to a mainframe computer in the South Australian Government Computer Centre. This direct link meant that delays in electors receiving enrolments cards was no more than one day. This compared with six weeks for the largely manual system used in the rest of Australia.

4.71   The advantages of the South Australian system were obvious and pointed to the need for appropriate computer technology to be implemented in the AEC Offices outside South Australia. The Committee saw that such an online electoral roll system would provide a dramatic improvement in the service to electors irrespective of regionalisation.

4.72   It was clear to the Committee that appropriate computer technology would offer the potential for a more accurate and up-to-date electoral roll.

The Efficiency Scrutiny and Scrutiny Report

4.73   During its Inquiry the Committee received submissions and heard evidence critical of the Efficiency Scrutiny and the Scrutiny's Report.

4.74   A submission from the Liberal and National Parties (LNP) was particularly critical of the Efficiency Scrutiny. The submission noted that the Electoral Commissioner had chosen regionalisation as the topic for the Efficiency Scrutiny and based his choice on the findings and recommendations of the Scott Report. However, the LNP suggested the Scott Report had not attached as high a priority to regionalisation as indicated by the Electoral Commissioner.

4.75   The submission drew attention to the terms of reference for the Efficiency Scrutiny and the Scrutiny's methodology. In particular, it considered the terms of reference were drawn too narrowly. The LNP believed a much wider inquiry was warranted. The submission noted that the Efficiency Scrutiny was conducted in less than three months and was limited to the views of AEC staff and the ACOA and APSA 'as well as previous reports/investigations and writings on the subject'.[35] The views of clients, namely voters and politicians were not sought.

4.76   The LNP found the rationale for the regionalisation proposal of the Efficiency Scrutiny was closely related to the financial resources available to the AEC. The LNP saw that the question of maintaining 148 Divisional Offices was 'essentially a matter of the Commission's - and the Government's - determination of its funding priorities'.[36] The LNP also noted that savings could be achieved regardless of regionalisation.

4.77   The LNP indicated they opposed regionalisation for various reasons. The reasons included:

- the Efficiency Scrutiny Report did not present a convincing case for regionalisation and it was an insufficient basis for making long term decisions;

- the evidence in the Report was inconclusive;

- the views of key client groups were not sought;

- the rationale for regionalisation was the need for improved computer facilities but this was an issue that should be dealt with separately; and

- the costs of regionalisation were clear and front end loaded. Potential benefits were less clear and would be achieved in the longer term.

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34. AEC, Corporate Information Technology Plan, June 1988, p. 6.

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35. Minutes of Evidence, p. S606.
36. Minutes of Evidence, p. S607.

4.78 The ACOA was similarly critical of the Efficiency Scrutiny noting that the AEC could have looked at other areas in the AEC, *if not the AEC as a whole, which offered potential for improving efficiency.*

4.79 The ACOA found the Efficiency Scrutiny had not addressed its terms of reference adequately and stated that *comments in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report consisted mainly of opinions and assumptions.*

4.80 The ACOA's criticisms of the Efficiency Scrutiny included:

- the Efficiency Scrutiny did not consider the status quo as an option;

- the Efficiency Scrutiny was based on the Scott Report which had little or no relevance to the AEC in 1987;

- the Efficiency Scrutiny relied heavily on the 1985 Review of Divisional Offices (RDO) to determine staffing levels for the proposed Regional Offices but the RDO Report had been the subject of strong criticism;

- there was no substantiation of the way in which options for a Regional Office structure were reached;

- the major basis for regionalisation was to achieve computerisation at a reasonable cost; and

- the accuracy of costings for computing equipment was to be questioned.

4.81 The ACOA concluded:

Overall, the Report gives the impression that it seeks to reach a perceived 'desired result' yet the inaccuracies and omissions which this submission seeks to correct, lead to the unmistakable conclusion that Regionalisation should not proceed.[37]

4.82 Criticism of the Efficiency Scrutiny was not limited to the ACOA and the LNP. Various DROs indicated to the Committee *that they were unimpressed with the Efficiency Scrutiny.* One such Officer, Mr Tony Hewson, DRO for Hume indicated that the Efficiency Scrutiny was chosen by the Electoral Commissioner without consultation with unions or staff and because he (Dr Hughes) wanted it.[38]

4.83 The Department of Finance offered no comment on the conduct of the Efficiency Scrutiny but questioned the 'figuring

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37. Minutes of Evidence, p. 402.
38. Minutes of Evidence, p. 472.

used in the Efficiency Scrutiny report ... for the costs and savings arising from regionalisation and [associated] computerisation'.[39] The Department criticised specifically the calculation of the payback period for the Option 1 and Option 2 regionalisation proposals.[40]

4.84 The Department's submission stated:

... Finance questions the costs and benefits associated with alternative proposals for computerisation identified in the scrutiny report (pages 159-160). The costings in the report *suggest a significant net cost for the introduction of a major computing system, even with regionalisation.* There is insufficient attention given to the detail of benefits from computing developments - in particular, the better maintenance of electoral rolls and the better conduct of elections. On the other hand, not all relevant costs seem to have been taken into account - for example, site costs, relocation costs *and possible redundancy payments.*

... The findings on break-even points (page 161 of the report) contain a basic flaw in *that there is no discounting for the time value of future outlays and savings.* By using data in the report and a discount factor of 10%, as a rate of return on capital, the computer proposal under option 1 (regional offices with substantial regionalisation in country areas) *would break-even after* 7 years. There is no break-even point under option 2 (regional offices with minimal regionalisation in country areas).[41]

4.85 At the *public hearing held on 16 June 1988* the Department of Finance stated that the AEC needed to do some more work on its assessment of costs and benefits. The Department indicated that it would be beneficial for the AEC to hold discussions with the Department on the matter.

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39. Minutes of Evidence, p. 806.
40. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 808-9.
41. Minutes of Evidence, pp. 808-809.

4.86   In assessing criticisms of the Efficiency Scrutiny and
the Scrutiny Report the Committee noted comments by the Electoral
Commissioner.

4.87   First, the Electoral Commissioner defended the Scott
Report. While completed 14 years ago he believed the Report was
significant for several reasons:

    1. it showed the AEC's problems were long term and not
       ephemeral;

    2. the diagnosis of the Scott Report came from an
       independent observer; and

    3. it was the product of 'practical men with knowledge
       of the business world' and not 'Canberra-bred
       bureaucrats'.[42]

4.88   Second,   the Commissioner defended his   choice of
regionalisation as the topic for the Efficiency Scrutiny noting
that he had made contact with the Block Efficiency Unit[43] to
ensure that union consultation was as full as possible and that
the Efficiency Scrutiny complied with stipulated ground rules. He
rejected the idea that there was something unfair or suspicious
about 'the selection of divisions, and only the divisions' for
the Scrutiny and stated that such suggestions overlooked other
reviews which had been conducted within the AEC. These reviews
had covered operational areas, corporate services and industrial
ballots.[44]

4.89   The Committee observed that the Efficiency Scrutiny had
been conducted in a similar fashion   to other efficiency
scrutinies and had apparently met all the necessary ground rules.
However, the Committee also questioned whether the Efficiency
Scrutiny had been the best form of review since it had been
conducted over a short period of time and with narrow terms of
reference.

4.90   Like the Department of Finance, the Committee
questioned the estimates of costs and benefits made in the
Efficiency Scrutiny Report. The Committee was unable to satisfy
itself that the estimates of costs and benefits were correct and
similarly was unable to verify the computer equipment needs which
were stated in the Report.

4.91   The Committee believed the Efficiency Scrutiny could
have sought the views of more people but saw that its own Inquiry
had achieved this. Nevertheless, the Committee's Inquiry had not
resolved deficiencies in detailed analysis or estimates of costs
and benefits which occurred in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report.
These matters were the responsibility of the AEC.

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42. Minutes of Evidence, p. 166.
43. Block Efficiency Unit was a Co-ordinating body for the
    Government's program of efficiency scrutinies.
44. Minutes of Evidence, p. 768.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

    . Local Knowledge
    . Education
    . Service to Electors
    . Staff Issues
    . Computerisation
    . Integrated Office Structure
    . Regionalisation

5.1   The Committee's Inquiry into the Report on the
Efficiency Scrutiny into Regionalisation within the Australian
Electoral Commission (AEC) has provided a unique opportunity for
the assessment of widely differing views on regionalisation. This
has been important because the issue is of vital concern to not
only the AEC but also the electorate at large and those who
represent the Australian people in the Commonwealth Parliament.

5.2   Submissions and evidence taken at five public hearings
have demonstrated a clear difference of opinion between the AEC
and others as to the best organisational structure for the AEC.
While the Electoral Commissioner and other senior staff of the
AEC (including the Efficiency Scrutineer) have argued strongly in
favour of regionalisation most of the submissions and evidence
received by the Committee have argued for a continuation of the
status quo.

5.3   The Committee has found its task of assessing the
merits of regionalisation made that much more difficult by the
fact   that   the   Efficiency Scrutiny Report argued   for
regionalisation with computerisation as an integral part of the
proposal whereas the AEC's submission argued for regionalisation
because of budgetary considerations.

5.4   In examining the Efficiency Scrutiny Report the
Committee has considered the criticisms made of the Scrutiny and
criticisms of the arguments in the Report.

5.5   The Committee notes that the Electoral Commissioner
felt justified is suggesting regionalisation as a topic for an
efficiency scrutiny and that the Scrutiny was conducted in
accordance with the requirements for efficiency scrutinies.

5.6   The Committee acknowledges the criticisms of the
Scrutiny that it was conducted too quickly and that its terms of
reference were too narrow. However, the Committee is of the view
that its own Inquiry has allowed sufficient time for all
interested parties to comment on the merits or otherwise of
regionalisation.

5.7   Six issues were important to the Committee's assessment of regionalisation. They were:

- local knowledge;

- education;

- service to electors;

- staff issues;

- computerisation; and

- the Integrated Office Structure.

Local Knowledge

5.8   While most submissions and witnesses agreed that local knowledge was important there were differences as to the best method to acquire local knowledge. Having considered different views on the means by which local knowledge should be acquired the Committee concludes that:

> the Divisional Office structure does not provide the only or necessarily the best means of acquiring local knowledge.

However, the Committee notes that a Regional Office structure is unproven as a better means of acquiring local knowledge.

Education

5.9   The Committee places great importance on the continuing need to educate the electorate about the Australian electoral system and has therefore examined with interest the current educational role undertaken by Divisional Returning Officers (DROs) and that which is proposed to occur under a Regional Office structure.

5.10   The Committee is of the view that in some States DROs are not visiting schools as intended under the AEC education program. The Committee believes the proposal to have specialist personnel responsible for education programs located in Regional Offices to be an improvement on the current situation. However, the Committee has found the AEC unable to provide detailed information on how such an arrangement might work on a day to day basis.

5.11   The Committee will monitor this aspect of the AEC's work.

Service to Electors

5.12   The issue of service to electors has been of particular importance throughout the Committee's Inquiry. It is an issue which has generated comment in nearly all the submissions received by the Committee.

5.13   The Committee notes that during election periods Divisional Offices may attract substantial personal business but that in non-election periods most Divisional Offices receive no more than fifteen visits per week. Nevertheless, the Committee believes the closure of Divisional Offices in rural areas would put unnecessary distances between voters and Divisional Offices. The distances would result in greater transport and communications difficulties, which in turn would adversely affect the tasks of roll maintenance and election management.

5.14   The Committee notes that the AEC is making an effort to make greater use of premises owned by other government bodies during election periods. The Committee believes this approach to be a good means of decentralising the AEC's service to electors.

Staff Issues

5.15   The regionalisation proposal places certain Divisional Office positions under threat of abolition and for this reason the Committee appreciates the anxiety which may be felt by some Divisional Office staff. However, the Committee notes that such losses would be offset to some extent by the effects of computerisation, if it occurred with regionalisation, as computerisation would lead to an increase in the number of computer personnel required by the AEC.

5.16   The Committee notes that the prospect of substantial regionalisation has had a negative effect of the morale of Divisional Office staff.

5.17   The Committee also notes that while DROs argue they are happy with the existing Divisional Office structure because it provides them with a career structure they like, the AEC argues the current career structure is unsatisfactory and would be improved greatly by the introduction of a Regional Office structure. The Committee believes changes resulting from the Integrated Office Structure and the consequent job redesign will improve the quality of jobs available to AEC staff but that some form of regionalisation would also offer AEC staff the potential for greater variety in their work.

Computerisation

5.18   The issue of computerisation is of major concern to the Committee and evidence from the AEC and other witnesses has shown there is an urgent need for the AEC to make appropriate use of modern information technology.

5.19   The Committee believes it is a serious deficiency in the AEC that its existing computer systems cannot cope with all the demands placed upon them, that at this time some of its basic finance and personnel systems are yet to be fully computerised and that at the Divisional Office level there are officers who have bought their own personal computers so that they may perform their duties more efficiently.

5.20   The Committee therefore concludes that:

> as a matter of priority, the Australian Electoral Commission must pursue the acquisition of modern computer equipment and systems.

5.21   The Committee is not satisfied as to the correctness of the estimates of costs and benefits resulting from comprehensive regionalisation which are contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and questions the computer equipment needs which are set out in the Report.

5.22   The Committee believes the AEC would benefit from independent external advice on the computer equipment and systems it requires to achieve its goals and in particular, the most cost-effective method of computerising its offices.

5.23   The Committee recommends that:

> the Australian Electoral Commission seek independent external advice on the computer equipment and systems needed in Australian Electoral Commission offices to enable the Australian Electoral Commission to achieve its goals in the best manner.

5.24   The Committee notes the difficulties that have faced the AEC in obtaining funds for computerisation. However, the Committee is firmly of the view that, irrespective of the regionalisation issue, the AEC has a strong case for funding. The Committee therefore recommends that:

> the Australian Electoral Commission adopt a more determined approach in seeking funds from the Federal Government for the purpose of acquiring modern computer equipment and systems.

Integrated Office Structure

5.25   The AEC's submission to the Committee portrayed the new Integrated Office Structure as something of a burden for the AEC, a change that forced the AEC to propose regionalisation as simply a means for containing its salary bill. This view contrasts with the evidence presented to the Committee by the Department of Finance and the Department of Employment, Education and Training. These departments saw that, rather than restricting the AEC, the Integrated Office Structure provided the AEC with new opportunities for restructuring and introducing job redesign.

5.26   While the Committee accepts the uniqueness of the AEC's organisational structure and in particular, the small numbers of staff working in each of the Divisional Offices, the Committee believes the AEC needs to see the Integrated Office Structure as an avenue for positive change. The Committee believes the new Integrated Office Structure combined with appropriate use of modern information technology offer the AEC potential for improving its efficiency and service to electors which are not considered in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and which have not been explored fully by the AEC.

5.27   The Committee recommends that:

> the Australian Electoral Commission seek to maximise the structural change and job redesign it can achieve through the Integrated Office Structure in combination with modern information technology.

Regionalisation

5.28   In its Inquiry the Committee has sought to consider broad issues rather than examine electorates on a case by case basis. Nevertheless, the Committee has examined issues relating to particular areas and/or electorates.

5.29   The Committee has examined the regionalisation schemes which are contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report and the AEC's submission. On balance the Committee concludes that:

> regionalisation of the Australian Electoral Commission's Divisional Offices should not proceed in rural areas because of the effect it would have on service to electors and the tasks of roll maintenance and election management.

5.30   However, the Committee notes that transport and communications infrastructures are well developed in metropolitan areas and that Divisional Offices are located close to each other in metropolitan areas. The Committee believes these factors important in any consideration of the applicability of regionalisation to metropolitan areas.

5.31   The Committee concludes that:

> transport and communications infrastructures which have developed in metropolitan areas and the proximity of metropolitan Divisional Offices to each other make metropolitan areas suitable for regionalisation.

5.32   The Committee is of the view that neither roll maintenance, election management nor service to electors would be affected adversely by the closure of some metropolitan Divisional Offices and the consequent establishment of Regional Offices.

5.33   The Committee concludes that:

> regionalisation   in   metropolitan   areas provides   opportunities   for   improved management   efficiency   without   adversely affecting service to electors and the tasks of roll maintenance and election management.

5.34   While the Committee has been presented with different regionalisation schemes it does not wish to draft specific proposals for the regionalisation of metropolitan offices. The Committee   believes   the   task   of   formulating   a   final regionalisation scheme to be the responsibility of the AEC.

5.35   However, the Committee believes the grouping of up to three metropolitan Divisional Offices to form Regional Offices could lead to an improvement in management efficiency without adversely affecting service to electors and the tasks of roll maintenance and election management.

5.36   The Committee notes that the Regional Office model in the AEC's submission provides a framework for the staffing of such Regional Offices. The Committee's view is that in any metropolitan Regional Office there should be officers at either the Administrative Service Officer (ASO) 4, ASO 5 or ASO 6 level who are responsible for specific Divisions on a continuing basis and that they be designated as Divisional Returning Officers for their respective Divisions.   For example, in a Regional Office formed from three Divisional Offices there might be a Regional Manager who is responsible for one Division and the oversight of two Deputy Regional Managers. One Deputy Regional Manager might be responsible for the second Division and the areas of enrolment and election preparation while the other Deputy Regional Manager might be responsible for the third Division and the areas of information, electoral education and administration.

5.37   The Committee therefore recommends that:

> regionalisation of the Australian Electoral Commission's Divisional Offices only occur in metropolitan   areas. The Regional Offices should be formed by the combination of up to three Divisional Offices; and

> senior staff within a metropolitan Regional Office at the Administrative Service Officer 4,   Administrative Service Officer 5, or Administrative Service Officer 6 level have continuing   responsibility   for   specific Divisions and be designated as Divisional Returning Officers for specific Divisions.

5.38   The Committee recognises that the Government will be the final arbiter in this matter but notes that it may wish to provide   comment to the Parliament on   the arrangement of Divisional and Regional Offices.

Michael J Lee, MP
Chairman
20 October 1988

Models for Regional Offices - Extract from the Report, <u>Efficiency</u>
<u>Scrutiny into Regionalisation: Volume One - Report</u>, pp. 69-83.

7.4 MODELS FOR REGIONAL OFFICES

Submissions to the Scrutiny proposed many variations for the Regional
Office structure, but they fell into 4 basic models:

.   modified co-location model
.   functional model
.   hybrid model
.   initial co-location, and review after next election.

Each model is examined below, with an example based on a region of 6
Divisions and one office.

Annual salary costs for the current Divisional Offices are:

	$
1 x CLAD 7	31423
1 x CLAD 4	23712
1 x CA 4	18429
TOTAL	73564
	x 6
For 6 Divisions	441384

NOTE: All salary costs are based on

.   current top of the range rates (set at 19.3.87); and
.   3 staff members per Divisional Office.

Consequently, current Divisional Office staffing costs are understated
because:

.   no allowance has been made for higher duties or other staff
    costs;

.   staffing for the field operations area averages 3.5 per Division,
    including Area Managers and their support staff. Most Divisions
    are staffed at an average of 3.2 to 3.4 over the year, but this
    varies from Division to Division.

It is preferable to understate current costs rather than to risk over-
estimating the potential savings under a regional structure.

Salary costs for the existing Divisional Office structure could
increase due to the following factors:

.   divisional Clerks are seeking a reclassification to CLAD 5

.   it is expected that the Office Based Structures Review will
    combine CLAD Class 7 and 8.

Such changes would cause a substantial increase in the salary costs
for the current Divisional Office structure.

Broadbanding

The proposed structure and costs will be affected by the broadbanding
proposals arising from the Office Based Structures Review.

The broadbanding proposals will lead to job redesign and restructuring
in the AEC, whether regionalisation is introduced or not. This in
turn will affect the costs of the current structure.

Consequently, all structures and costings in this Report are based
upon the current work classifications, for consistency and comparison
purposes.

While many details of the implementation of the Office Based
Structures Review are not yet known, it is expected that CLAD Classes
7 and 8 will be combined.

Consequently, DROs will become CLAD 7/8 and Area Managers will become
CLAD 9, on the basis of the principle stated in the Office Based
Structures Review that a supervisor must be of a higher
classification. Similarly, Regional Managers must be at the CLAD 9
level as they will supervise staff at the CLAD 7/8 level.

OPTION A - Modified Co-location Model

The main units in this model are:

. Regional Manager

. A separate DRO for each Division in the Region

. Support staff of clerks, clerical assistants, etc. to be shared between DROs.

The Regional Manager

. monitors the work of DROs in the region

. manages staffing, financial matters and electoral education

. allocates support staff to tasks in the event of disputes between DROs

The DROs work much as they do in Divisions, except that they are located in a Regional Office and share support staff on a co-operative basis, i.e. support staff are allocated to tasks for each DRO as required.

The support staff form a "resource pool". Some tasks might be done in that pool for all Divisions in the group (e.g. counter enquiries, word processing, data entry) but staff are generally drawn from the pool and allocated to a DRO for a specific task.

There are several variations of this model:

. some include an administrative assistant for the Regional Manager

. some include a separate DRO and Clerk for each Division

. some suggest that certain tasks are done on a regional basis, (e.g. one group handles data entry for enrolment for all Divisions in the region); others see each DRO working separately on all tasks

. the number and level of support staff varies.

The most frequent version of the model may be represented as follows:
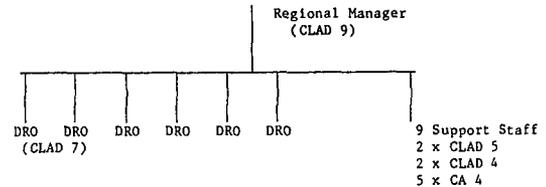
Annual Salary Costs are:

		$
1 x CLAD 9	@ 36827	36827
6 x CLAD 7	@ 31423	188538
2 x CLAD 5	@ 26367	52734
2 x CLAD 4	@ 23712	47424
5 x CA 4	@ 18429	92145
TOTAL		417668

Annual salary savings
compared with 6 Divisional
Offices ($441384)   23716

Advantages

. This model retains the concept of a separate permanent DRO for each Division and each DRO can develop detailed knowledge of a specific Division.

. It is not radically different from the current structure, and staff would find it easy to adjust to the new environment.

. It requires only minor amendments to the Commonwealth Electoral Act.

. It can be applied to a region of any size, i.e. 3 Divisions or 10 Divisions.

Disadvantages

. It is top heavy; 45% of the total salary cost is at CLAD 7 level.

. All DROs are automatically placed in the new structure, but staff at lower levels are disadvantaged.

. The career structure is still poor, with few positions between CA 4 and DRO level.

- The Regional Manager is more an overseer than a manager, with 6 separate DROs each running their own Divisions.

- The small number of support staff means that each DRO will have little assistance available for day to day tasks.

- The support staff may find themselves switched rapidly from one task to another, as they do not "belong" in any particular niche within the structure.

- DROs are still required to manage a wide variety of different tasks and have no opportunity to develop specialist skills in any particular area.

OPTION B - Functional Model

The main units in this model are:

- Regional Manager

- 4 work groups based on electoral functions:

    - **enrolment group** - manages enrolment processing and habitation review, objection action, non voter/dual voter follow up

    - **election preparations group** - manages all election preparations, materials planning and election stores, polling place premises and staffing, distribution of election materials, mobile polling and postal voting arrangements, arrangements for scrutiny, financial forecasts for elections

    - **information and electoral education group** - manages information and education activities, school visits, displays, counter and phone enquiries, statistics and returns, election advertising, training

    - **administration group** - manages personnel, finance, office services, registry, word processing, recruitment of casual staff, office equipment, office stores and stationery, security, payment of polling and casual staff.

The Regional Manager is responsible for managing the Commission's activities throughout the region, i.e. there are no separate DROs. During an election, the Regional Manager is the Returning Officer for each Division in the region and conducts the election by delegating certain tasks to specific staff members, in much the same way that the AEO conducts the Senate election.

The precise arrangements could vary from region to region. For instance, the Regional Manager might receive and process nominations personally, or might delegate this to the head of the election preparations group.

This model needs to be flexible, so that staff can be moved from one group to another as activities change. For instance, the enrolment group may need more staff during non-voter follow up work. This could be provided by moving staff from another group where post-election work has decreased (e.g. information and electoral education group).

Casual staff could be added to any work group to handle peak workloads.

This model may be represented as follows:

```
                    Regional Manager
                    (CLAD 9)
  |          |            |               |
Enrolment  Election   Information      Administration
           Preparations & Electoral
                        Education

1 x CLAD 7  1 x CLAD 7  1 x CLAD 7      1 x CLAD 7
1 x CLAD 6  1 x CLAD 5  1 x CA 4        1 x CLAD 4
2 x CLAD 4  1 x CA 4                    1 x CA 4
3 x CA 4
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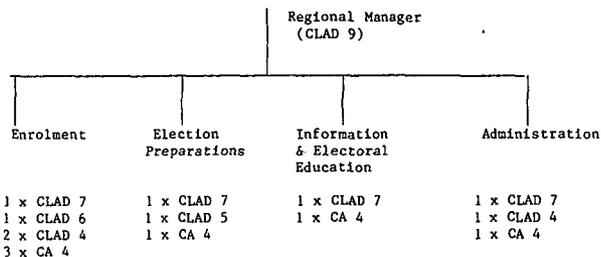
Annual Salary costs are: $

1 x CLAD 9	@ 36827	36827
4 x CLAD 7	@ 31423	125692
1 x CLAD 6	@ 28853	28853
1 x CLAD 5	@ 26367	26367
3 x CLAD 4	@ 23712	71136
6 x CA 4	@ 18429	110574

TOTAL   399449

Annual salary savings
compared with 6 Divisional
Offices ($441384)   41935

Advantages

. The Regional Manager will be able to manage the region, not just
  supervise.

. The model enables staff to concentrate on a particular area of
  work and build up specialist skills; this should make the region
  more efficient overall.

. It provides a better career structure for staff. There are
  opportunities for staff to progress through the structure from
  CA 4 to CLAD 9, but the number of levels in each work group is
  still small, i.e. the structure is reasonably flat. Staff can
  also move from group to group as opportunities arise, to gain
  experience in a different area.

. Permanent staff at the clerical assistant level are all at the
  Clerical Assistant Grade 4 level, and could be "multi-skilled",
  i.e. they should all be trained in keyboard skills for data entry
  and word processing, to handle telephone and counter enquiries
  and the general range of clerical support work in the region.
  This should ensure maximum flexibility, as staff can be moved
  when necessary to cover unexpected absences, such as sick leave.

Disadvantages

. There may be some loss of "local knowledge" as staff members work
  for the region instead of a particular Division. However, this
  should be offset by factors such as:

  - the enrolment group can concentrate on enrolment and
    habitation review. Boundary riding should enable them to
    develop a good knowledge of "tricky" areas in the region;

  - the election preparations group can build up a good knowledge
    of polling booths, experienced polling officials, special
    requirements for interpreters, etc. by travel within the
    region;

  - a vehicle will be available for boundary riding, visits to
    polling booths, etc.

. It will require amendments to the Commonwealth Electoral Act.

. The model will need to be varied according to the number of
  Divisions in the Region.

. It may be too difficult for the Regional Manager to be the
  Returning Officer for six Divisions during the election period.
  While many tasks can be delegated, it is likely that the press,
  candidates, political parties, OICs of polling booths, will all
  want to contact the "Returning Officer" and the job may become
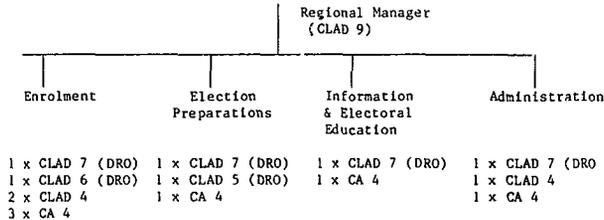 impossible to manage during elections.

OPTION C — Hybrid Model

This model is similar to Option B, except that a DRO is appointed to
each Division from the issue of the writ for an election until the
return of the writ.

The head of each work group is appointed as a DRO, and other staff
within the Regional Office are appointed as DRO and paid at the CLAD 7
level for that period. In a region of 6 Divisions, the DROs would be:

4 x work group heads
1 x CLAD 6 — enrolment
1 x CLAD 5 — election preparations

This model may be represented as follows:

```
                          Regional Manager
                             (CLAD 9)
    |              |              |                    |
Enrolment      Election      Information        Administration
              Preparations   & Electoral
                              Education
```

1 x CLAD 7 (DRO)	1 x CLAD 7 (DRO)	1 x CLAD 7 (DRO)	1 x CLAD 7 (DRO
1 x CLAD 6 (DRO)	1 x CLAD 5 (DRO)	1 x CA 4	1 x CLAD 4
2 x CLAD 4	1 x CA 4		1 x CA 4
3 x CA 4			

Annual Salary costs are:

		NON-ELECTION YEAR $	ELECTION YEAR $
1 x CLAD 9	@ 36827	36827	36827
4 x CLAD 7	@ 31423	125692	125692
1 x CLAD 6	@ 28853	28853	29086*
1 x CLAD 5	@ 26367	26367	27222*
3 x CLAD 4	@ 23712	71136	71136
6 x CA 4	@ 18429	110574	110574
TOTAL		399449	400537
Annual salary savings compared with 6 Divisional Offices ($441384)		41935	40847

*   Assumes 3 months at base level CLAD 7
    Does not include overtime, election allowances, etc.

Between elections, the Regional Manager is appointed DRO for all six
Divisions.

Each of the potential DROs will have a permanent "attachment" to a
particular Division and be appointed the DRO for that Division at
election time. This will enable them to build up knowledge of that
Division between elections.

The Regional Manager must decide which election tasks will be done
separately by each DRO and which will be done on a regional basis.
The exact arrangements can vary from region to region, according to
the characteristics of the Divisions and the preferences of the staff
in each region. However, arrangements should be discussed and
decisions made well in advance of the next election.

The following could be done on a regional basis:

-   enrolment
-   distribution of ballot boxes and screens
-   advertising
-   postal voting in the Regional Office
-   postal voting centres elsewhere in the region
-   payment of polling officials.

The following could be done separately by each DRO, drawing on work
already done by the election preparations group since the last
election:

-   arrangements for use of schools, halls, etc. as polling places
-   appointment of polling officials.

These tasks will be much easier than in the past; through the office
automation software, the computer system will be able to generate
letters concerning use of premises, appointment of polling officials,
etc, i.e. the DRO will simply need to check the computer records of
staff and premises, make the necessary changes and most of the
documentation can then be generated automatically.

Other election tasks will need to be done separately by each DRO. For
instance:

-   nominations

-   scrutiny (but the Senate Recheck can be done on a regional basis)

-   declaration of poll.

DROs will not be able to leave their usual work group entirely, as some activities will still need to continue on a regional basis. This situation already applies to Head Office staff who have to take on quite different tasks during elections as well as maintain their usual work. However, DROs should have fewer conflicting demands on their time than they do under the present Divisional Office structure, and they will each have a group of casual staff to assist them, as they do in Divisions at present. The election preparations group, plus modern technology, should ensure that there is less work to be done after the election is announced.

The Regional Manager must be responsible for the overall management of the region and, ultimately, for the success or failure of an election in any of those Divisions. Some tasks affecting the conduct of elections will be done on a regional basis, both during and between elections; the DRO will not have total control of all of these activities and should not be held responsible for those beyond that direct control. However, in the event of a Court of Disputed Returns, the Court would be likely to question the DRO and any other staff members who carried out any aspect of the election arrangements affecting that Division, as well as the Regional Manager who has overall responsibility.

Where activities are conducted on a regional basis, costs should be counted against the region. Again, it is not reasonable to charge costs for an activity against a Division and hold the DRO accountable if the DRO does not have total control of that activity.

Advantages

. The Regional Manager will be able to manage the region, not just supervise.

. The model enables staff to concentrate on a particular area of work and build up specialist skills; this should make the region more efficient overall.

. It provides a better career structure for staff. There are opportunities for staff to progress through the structure from CA 4 to CLAD 9, but the number of levels in each work group is still small, i.e. the structure is reasonably flat. Staff can also move from group to group as opportunities arise, to gain experience in a different area.

. The Regional Manager's job during the election period will be reasonable. This person can:

- decide which activities will be conducted on a regional basis and allocate the necessary resources;

- provide advice and support to DROs, especially new DROs;

- ensure that resources are available to handle continuing regional activities (e.g. enrolment).

. The DRO's job at election time will be easier to manage than at present, because some tasks can be done on a regional basis, and each DRO has fewer separate tasks.

. DROs will be able to draw on the advice and support of colleagues in the critical election period, and on the work already done by the election preparations group.

. The DRO can build up knowledge of the Division between elections. Although the DRO is appointed only at the issue of the writ, the Regional Manager will allocate Divisions on a permanent basis. Of course, a DRO may have to subsequently run the election in a different Division because another staff member leaves or becomes ill, but this happens under the present structure.

Disadvantages

. This model will require amendments to the Commonwealth Electoral Act.

. It will need to be varied according to the number of Divisions in the Region.

. The accounting system will need to allow for different structures in different regions.
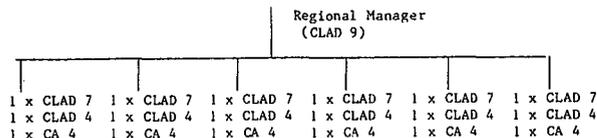
OPTION D - Initial co-location, with review after next election

This model recognises that overheads will be reduced with regionalisation but proposes that the current staffing numbers and classifications be retained while the computer system is introduced.

It proposes:

- appointment of Regional Managers

- existing Divisional Office staff move to Regional Offices and work as co-located divisional staff, i.e. there is 1 x CLAD 7, 1 x CLAD 4 and 1 x CA 4 for each Division

- introduction of the new computer system

- after a complete habitation review and a General Election, a detailed work study to assess the impact of the computer system and recommend changes to the staffing numbers and structures.

This model may be represented as follows:

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                          ┌─────────────────┐
                          │ Regional Manager │
                          │    (CLAD 9)      │
                          └─────────────────┘
┌──────────┬──────────┬──────────┬──────────┬──────────┬──────────┐
1 x CLAD 7  1 x CLAD 7  1 x CLAD 7  1 x CLAD 7  1 x CLAD 7  1 x CLAD 7
1 x CLAD 4  1 x CLAD 4  1 x CLAD 4  1 x CLAD 4  1 x CLAD 4  1 x CLAD 4
1 x CA 4    1 x CA 4    1 x CA 4    1 x CA 4    1 x CA 4    1 x CA 4
```

Annual Salary costs are:

		$
1 x CLAD 9	@ 36827	36827
6 x CLAD 7	@ 31423	188538
6 x CLAD 4	@ 23712	142272
6 x CA 4	@ 18429	110574
TOTAL		478211

| Additional annual salary costs compared with 6 Divisional Offices ($441384) | | 36827 |

Advantages

- This model is the easiest to implement, as it does not involve any radical structural change in the initial phase, but still reduces overhead costs.

- It provides the opportunity to introduce the computer system into Regional Offices, thus minimising the cost of the proposed system, without introducing additional structural changes at the same time.

- It enables the impact of the new computer system to be evaluated in detail after a habitation review and a General Election. Requirements for staff numbers and classifications can be reviewed and a new structure designed in the light of that evaluation.

Disadvantages

- This model has higher initial expenses in staff salaries than other models.

RECOMMENDATION

Option D offers the opportunity for the best long-term outcome. In the short-term, Regional Offices can be established to reduce overhead costs and the new computer system can be introduced at a reasonable cost. In the longer-term, the impact of the computer system can be evaluated in detail and a new staffing structure can be developed to meet known needs. However, the initial cost in salaries in higher than for Option C.

If funds are not available for this Option D transition phase, Option C offers the best combination of practicality and efficiency but it will need to be modified for smaller or larger groupings of Divisions.

Regional Offices will have different structures depending on the number of Divisions in the group, in the same way that State Head Offices have different structures according to the characteristics of each State. Models for these groupings are shown in Attachment 23.

Country Divisions

While the concept of regionalisation of groups of 5 to 7 Divisions is practical in metropolitan areas, it is not possible to move all Divisional Offices in country Divisions into Regional Offices of this size.

However, most country Divisions can be regionalised into groups of 2 or 3 Divisions. This will not lead to great savings in salaries or most overhead costs, but it will reduce the cost of the proposed computer system substantially.

There are several options for managing country Divisions:

— the DRO reports direct to the Director, Operations Branch or Deputy Australian Electoral Officer in Head Office; or

— the Divisional Office is attached to a Regional Office and operates as an "outpost"; the DRO reports to the Regional Manager; or

— a group of country Divisions forms a region but has several offices; the Regional Manager is located within the region or in Head Office.

Different arrangements can apply for different country offices. Each case should be considered separately.

Appendix B

Integrated Office Structure - Extract from Australian Electoral Commission Submission on Regionalisation, Attachment 2 (Minutes of Evidence, p.53).

ATTACHMENT 2
-A9-

AGREED STRUCTURE
(COMPARED WITH SUBSUMED STRUCTURES)
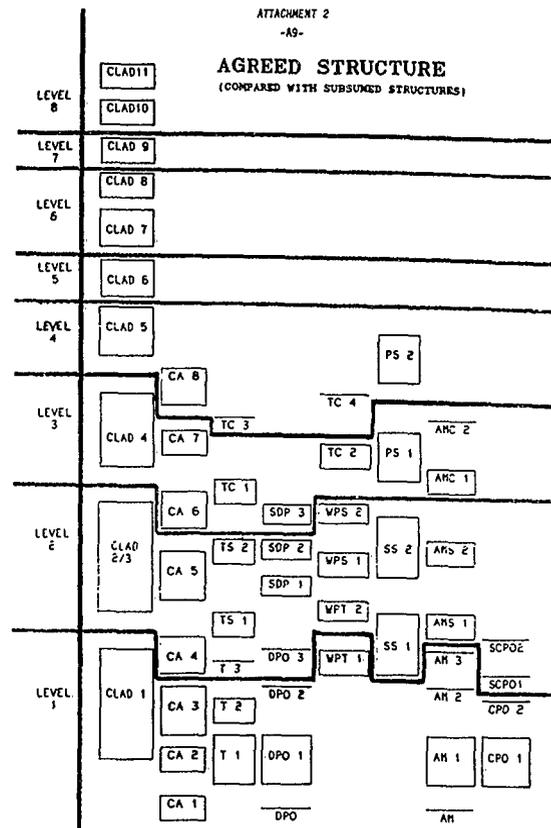
Efficiency Scrutiny Report Regionalisation Scheme

Appendix C summarises the regionalisation scheme contained in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report, pp. 89-128.

Pages 84 - 130 of the Efficiency Scrutiny Report provide proposed regional groupings of Divisions and the locations of Regional Offices.

The Report gives two options for arranging Divisions. Option 1 arrangements of Divisions are based upon regionalisation in metropolitan areas and substantial regionalisation in country areas. Option 2 arrangements are based upon regionalisation in metropolitan areas and minimal regionalisation in country areas.

The Report notes that the proposed regions are a starting point to enable cost comparisons to be made.

Region	Divisions (No. of Divisions)	Location of Office(s)
NSW 1........	Bennelong, Berowra, Bradfield, Mackellar, North Sydney, Warringah (6)	Chatswood to Killara
NSW 2........	Grayndler, Kingsford-Smith, Lowe, Phillip, Sydney, Wentworth (6)	South of CBD or Strathfield
NSW 3........	Dundas, Greenway, Mitchell, Parramatta (4)	Parramatta *
	Chifley, Lindsay, Macquarie (3)	Penrith
NSW 4........	Banks, Barton, Blaxland, Cook, Reid, St George (6)	Bankstown or Hurstville area
NSW 5 (Opt 1)	Charlton, Hunter, Lyne, Newcastle, Shortland (5)	Newcastle *
	Dobell, Robertson (2)	Gosford
(Opt 2)	Newcastle, Shortland (2)	Newcastle *
	Charlton, Hunter (2)	Maitland
	Lyne (1)	Taree
	Dobell, Robertson (2)	Gosford

* Location of Regional Manager

Region	Divisions (No. of Divisions)	Location of Office(s)
NSW 6 (Opt 1)	Fowler, Macarthur, Prospect, Werriwa (4)	Liverpool *
	Cunningham, Hughes, Throsby (3)	Wollongong
(Opt 2)	Cunningham, Throsby (2)	Wollongong
	Hughes (1)	Sutherland
	Fowler, Prospect (2)	Liverpool *
	Macarthur, Werriwa (2)	Campbelltown
NSW 7 (Opt 1)	Canberra, Fraser, Eden-Monaro, Gilmore (4)	Canberra or Queanbeyan *
	Hume, Riverina-Darling (2)	Wagga Wagga
		Broken Hill
	Farrer (1)	Albury
(Opt 2)	Canberra, Fraser, Eden-Monaro, (3)	Canberra or Queanbeyan *
	Gilmore (1)	Goulburn
	Hume (1)	Cootamundra
	Riverina-Darling (1)	Narrandera
		Broken Hill
	Farrer (1)	Albury
NSW 8 (Opt 1)	Cowper, New England, Page, Richmond (4)	Grafton *
	Calare, Gwydir, Parkes (3)	Dubbo
		Sydney or within Region *
(Opt 2)	Calare (1)	Orange
	Cowper (1)	Kempsey
	Gwydir (1)	Narrabri

* Location of Regional Manager

Region	Divisions (No. of Divisions)	Location of Office(s)
	New England (1)	Armidale
	Page (1)	Grafton
	Parkes (1)	Dubbo
	Richmond (1)	Lismore
VIC 1.........	Goldstein, Henty, Higgins, Kooyong, Melbourne, Melbourne Ports (6)	Richmond
VIC 2.........	Aston, Bruce, Chisholm, Deakin, La Trobe (5)	Box Hill or Ringwood *
	Casey, Streeton (2)	Lillydale
VIC 3.........	Batman, Jagajaga, McEwan, Menzies, Scullin, Wills (6)	Heidelberg or Preston
VIC 4.........	Burke, Calwell, Gellibrand, Lalor, Maribyrnong (5)	Essendon or Moonee Ponds *
	Corangamite, Corio (2)	Geelong
VIC 5.........	Flinders, Dunkley, Holt, Hotham, Isaacs (5)	Frankston *
	Gippsland, McMillan (2)	Morwell or Traralgon
VIC 6 (Opt 1)	Bendigo, Indi, Mallee, Murray (4)	Bendigo *
	Ballarat, Wannon (2)	Ballarat
VIC 6 (Opt 2)	Ballarat, Wannon (2)	Ballarat *
	Bendigo (1)	Bendigo
	Mallee (1)	Mildura
	Murray, Indi (2)	Shepparton

* - Location of Regional Manager

Region	Divisions (No. of Divisions)	Location of Office(s)
QLD 1.........	Brisbane, Lilley, Petrie, Ryan (4)	Lutwyche *
	Fairfax, Fisher, Wide Bay (3)	Nambour
QLD 2.........	Bowman, Fadden, Forde, Griffith, Moreton (5)	Upper Mt. Gravatt
QLD 3 (Opt 1)	Groom, Maranoa, Rankin, Oxley (4)	Toowoomba or Ipswich
	McPherson, Moncrieff (2)	Southport
(Opt 2)	Groom, Maranoa (2)	Toowoomba
	Rankin, Oxley (2)	Ipswich *
	McPherson, Moncrieff (2)	Southport
QLD 4 (Opt 1)	Capricornia, Dawson, Hinkler (3)	Rockhampton *
	Herbert, Kennedy, Leichhardt (3)	Cairns
(Opt 2)	Capricornia (1)	Rockhampton *
	Dawson (1)	Mackay
	Herbert (1)	Townsville
	Hinkler (1)	Bundaberg
	Kennedy, Leichhardt (2)	Cairns
		Mt. Isa
SA 1.........	Adelaide, Bonython, Makin, Port Adelaide, Sturt (5)	Enfield
SA 2.........	Boothby, Hawker, Hindmarsh, Kingston, Mayo (5)	Edwardstown or Marion or Glenelg
SA 3.........	Barker (1)	Mt. Gambier
	Grey (1)	Port Pirie
	Wakefield (1)	Kadina

* Location of Regional Manager

Region	Divisions (No. of Divisions)	Location of Office(s)
WA 1........	Cowan, Curtin, Perth, Stirling (4)	Karrinyup *
	Moore, O'Connor (2)	Midland
WA 2........	Brand, Canning, Fremantle, Swan, Tangney (5)	Booragoon
WA 3........	Forrest (1)	Bunbury
	Kalgoorlie (1)	Kalgoorlie
		Karratha
TAS 1........	Franklin, Denison (2)	Hobart *
	Bass, Braddon, Lyons (3)	Launceston
NT 1........	Northern Territory	Darwin
		Alice Springs

* Location of Regional Manager

An Alternative Regionalisation Scheme - Extract from Australian Electoral Commission Submission on Regionalisation, pp. 27-29. (Minutes of Evidence, pp. 35-37).

Region	Divisions
NSW 1	Bennelong, Berowra, Bradfield, Mackellar, North Sydney, Warringah (6)
NSW 2	Dundas, Lowe, Mitchell, Parramatta, Reid (5)
NSW 3	Grayndler, Kingsford-Smith, Phillip, Sydney, Wentworth (5)
NSW 4	Banks, Barton, Blaxland, Cook, St George (5)
NSW 5	Chifley, Greenway, Lindsay, Macquarie (4)
NSW 6	Fowler, Hughes, Prospect, Werriwa (4)
NSW 7	Cunningham, Macarthur, Throsby (3)
NSW 8	Dobell, Robertson (2)
NSW 9	Charlton, Hunter, Newcastle, Shortland (4)
NSW 10	Cowper, Lyne (2)
NSW 11	Page, Richmond (2)
NSW 12	Calare, Gwydir, New England*, Parkes (4): satellite office at Armidale
NSW/ACT 13	Canberra, Eden-Monaro, Fraser, Gilmore (4)
NSW 14	Farrer, Hume, Riverina-Darling (3): satellite offices at Albury and Broken Hill

*Or possibly in NSW 10

VIC 1	Batman, Jagajaga, Melbourne, Melbourne Ports, Scullin, Wills (6)
VIC 2	Dunkley, Flinders, Goldstein, Holt, Hotham, Isaacs (6)
VIC 3	Bruce, Chisholm, Deakin, Henty, Higgins, Kooyong (6)
VIC 4	Aston, Casey, LaTrobe, McEwen, Menzies, Streeton (6)
VIC 5	Burke, Calwell, Gellibrand, Lalor, Maribyrnong (5)
VIC 6	Gippsland, McMillan (2)
VIC 7	Indi, Murray (2)
VIC 8	Corangamite, Corio (2)
VIC 9	Ballarat, Bendigo, Mallee, Wannon (4): satellite offices at Bendigo, Mildura and Warrnambool

QLD 1	Brisbane, Griffith, Lilley, Petrie, Ryan (5)
QLD 2	Bowman, Fadden, Forde, Moreton, Oxley, Rankin (6)
QLD 3	McPherson, Moncrieff (2)
QLD 4	Groom, Maranoa (2)
QLD 5	Fairfax, Fisher, Wide Bay (3): satellite office at Maryborough
QLD 6	Capricornia, Dawson, Hinkler (3): satellite offices at Bundaberg and Mackay
QLD 7	Herbert, Kennedy, Leichhardt (3): satellite offices at Mt Isa and Townsville

WA 1	Cowan, Curtin, Moore, Perth, Stirling (5)
WA 2	Brand, Canning, Fremantle, Swan, Tangney (5)
WA 3	Forrest, Kalgoorlie, O'Connor (3): satellite offices at Bunbury, Kalgoorlie and Karratha

SA 1	Adelaide, Bonython, Makin, Port Adelaide, Sturt (5)
SA 2	Boothby, Hawker, Hindmarsh, Kingston, Mayo (5)
SA 3	Barker, Grey, Wakefield (3): satellite offices at Kadina and Mt Gambier

TAS 1	Denison, Franklin (2)
TAS 2	Bass, Braddon, Lyons (3)

The Electoral Commission's Rationales for Proposed Combinations of Divisions into Regions - Extract from Electoral Commission Submission dated 3 May 1988 (Minutes of Evidence, pp. S1069-73).

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RATIONALES FOR PROPOSED COMBINATIONS OF DIVISIONS INTO REGIONS

The Commission's Submission has been reviewed in the light of other Submissions made to the Joint Standing Committee, and should be varied by providing for additional satellite offices as follows: NSW 10 in either Kempsey or Taree, depending on which has the regional office located there; and NSW 12 in Narrabri.

As a consequence, satellite offices are now envisaged in the following non-metropolitan cities and towns: NSW 10 Kempsey or Taree; NSW 11 Armidale (unless in NSW 12); NSW 12 Armidale (unless in NSW 11) and Narrabri; NSW 14 Albury and Broken Hill; VIC 9 Bendigo, Mildura and Warrnambool; QLD 5 Maryborough; QLD 6 Bundaberg and Mackay; QLD 7 Mt Isa and Townsville; WA 3 Bunbury, Kalgoorlie and Karratha; SA 3 Kadina and Mount Gambier.

NSW 1   Bennelong, Berowra, Bradfield, Mackellar, North Sydney, Warringah (6)
         The Divisions form a compact geographical area on Sydney's North Shore. They are built-up urban Divisions with a mostly stable elector population and their homogeneity would allow a maximum combination of 6 Divisions conveniently administered from a regional office between Chatswood and Pymble.

NSW 2   Dundas, Lowe, Mitchell, Paramatta, Reid (5)
         The Divisions comprise a belt of mid-western and north-western Sydney suburbs readily accessible from the regional centre of Parramatta.

NSW 3   Grayndler, Kingsford-Smith, Phillip, Sydney, Wentworth (5)
         The Divisions form a compact geographical area encompassing inner-western, inner-city and eastern suburbs of Sydney with high density housing and a relatively highly transient population. They could be conveniently administered from a regional office near the Central Business District.

NSW 4   Banks, Barton, Blaxland, Cook, St George (5)
         The Divisions comprise a ring of suburbs around the Botany Bay area and in Sydney's near south-west. They comprise fairly stable elector populations and could be conveniently administered from a regional office in Hurstville.

NSW 5   Chifley, Greenway, Lindsay, Macquarie (4)
         The Divisions encompass the growing suburban sprawl in Sydney's west and north-west. They comprise a majority of young families with steady elector growth and could be effectively administered from the growing regional centre of Penrith.

NSW 6   Fowler, Hughes, Prospect, Werriwa (4)
         The Divisions encompass the growing suburban sprawl in Sydney's west and south-west, with large elector growth and a high proportion of non-English-speaking background electors. They could conveniently be administered from the regional centre of Liverpool.

NSW 7   Cunningham, Macarthur, Throsby (3)
         The Divisions form a geographical unit encompassing the Illawarra, Southern tablelands and near South Coast which up to 1984 had comprised the Divisions of Cunningham and Macarthur. They could be administered from the provincial city of Wollongong.

NSW 8   Dobell, Robertson (2)
         The Divisions form a compact geographical area on the Central
         Coast corresponding substantially to the old Division of
         Robertson and could conveniently be administered from the
         regional centre of Gosford.

NSW 9   Charlton, Hunter, Newcastle, Shortland (4)
         The Divisions encompass the city of Newcastle, its environs and
         the Hunter Valley with major links to the provincial city of
         Newcastle which could provide the administrative centre.

NSW 10   Cowper, Lyne (2)
         The Divisions are geographically compact Divisions with
         community of interest in farming and tourism, and centred on the
         mid-North Coast with major transport links from either Taree or
         Kempsey, the current Divisional office locations. In the light
         of representations from the area, there may be justification for
         a satellite office in the other centre as well.

NSW 11   New England*, Page, Richmond (2 or 3)
         The Divisions are geographically compact Divisions with
         community of interest in farming and tourism, and centred on the
         far-North Coast with major transport links from either Grafton
         or Lismore, the current Divisional Office locations. The
         Division of New England could also be conveniently included in
         this region with a satellite office in Armidale, site of the
         current Divisional Office.

NSW 12   Calare, Gwydir, New England*, Parkes (3 or 4)
         The Divisions are in western and north-western New South Wales
         with major transport links to the provincial city of Dubbo where
         the regional office could be located. The Division of New
         England could also be conveniently included in this region with
         a satellite office in Armidale, the site of the current
         Divisional Office. In the light of representations from the
         area, there may be justification for a satellite office in
         Narrabri.

NSW/ACT 13 Canberra, Eden-Monaro, Fraser, Gilmore (4)
         The region encompasses the South Coast and Southern Tablelands
         areas of New South Wales and the ACT. The region could
         conveniently be administered from the provincial city of
         Queanbeyan which has major transport links with all parts of the
         region.

NSW 14   Farrer, Hume, Riverina-Darling (3)
         The region encompasses the far western and southern rural areas
         of New South Wales. It would comprise almost 50% of the area
         of the State, but this would be met by administering the region
         from the provincial city of Wagga Wagga with satellite offices
         in the current locations of Albury and Broken Hill.

VIC 1   Batman, Jagajaga, Melbourne, Melbourne Ports, Scullin, Wills (6)
         The Divisions share social characteristics as dormitory
         Divisions with multi-cultural populations around the Central
         Business District and to its north, with flats and group
         accomodation in 2 Divisions and more cottage-residential in the
         other 4. There are a number of options for location of a
         regional office.

VIC 2   Dunkley, Flinders, Goldstein, Holt, Hotham, Isaacs (6)
         The Divisions are mostly settled cottage-residential in the
         south-eastern area of Melbourne with growth still in Flinders
         and Holt. There are a number of options for location of a
         regional office.

VIC 3   Bruce, Chisholm, Deakin, Henty, Higgins, Kooyong (6)
         The Divisions are closely settled with Box Hill Central a
         predominant administrative and shopping centre suitable for the
         regional office.

VIC 4   Aston, Casey, LaTrobe, McEwen, Menzies, Streeton (6)
         The Divisions share characteristics and geographical features as
         metropolitan fringe with considerable growth still taking place.
         There are a number of options for location of a regional office.

VIC 5   Burke, Calwell, Gellibrand, Lalor, Maribyrnong (5)
         The Divisions are metropolitan fringe with substantial growth
         and settled inner suburbs with multi-cultural populations.
         There are a number of options for location of a regional office.

VIC 6   Gippsland, McMillan (2)
         Both Divisions are relatively stable in enrolment whilst much of
         the area of Gippsland is thinly settled. The region could be
         administered from an office in either Morwell or Traralgon in
         the Latrobe Valley.

VIC 7   Indi, Murray (2)
         The Divisions share characteristics as rural Divisions and could
         conveniently be administered from the provincial city of
         Shepparton.

VIC 8   Corangamite, Corio (2)
         The Divisions encompass the provincial city of Geelong and
         environs, and could be administered from a single centre in
         Geelong.

VIC 9   Ballarat, Bendigo, Mallee, Wannon (4)
         The Divisions encompass the western part of Victoria, and could
         conveniently be administered from Ballarat (though Bendigo would
         also be suitable) with satellite offices in Bendigo, Mildura and
         Warrnambool.

QLD 1   Brisbane, Griffith, Lilley, Petrie, Ryan (5)
The region encompasses Brisbane Divisions north and immediately south of the Brisbane River. There are a number of options for location of a regional office.

QLD 2   Bowman, Fadden, Forde, Moreton, Oxley, Rankin (6)
The region encompasses Divisions south of the Brisbane River and including the proivincial city of Ipswich. Two Divisions have rural sectors but are predominantly urban. There are a number of options for location of a regional office.

QLD 3   McPherson, Moncrieff (2)
The Divisions comprise the provincial city of Gold Coast and its environs. A co-located office is about to open in Southport.

QLD 4   Groom, Maranoa (2)
The Divisions have shared geographic and socio-economic characteristics, with the provincial city of Toowoomba constituting a suitable administrative centre.

QLD 5   Fairfax, Fisher, Wide Bay (3)
The Divisions derive from the previous Divisions of Fisher and Wide Bay, and have related interests in tourism and farming with the provincial center of Nambour providing an administratrive center. There should be a satellite office at Maryborough.

QLD 6   Capricornia, Dawson, Hinkler (3)
The Divisions have related rural socio-economic interests. The provincial city of Rockhampton would be a suitable administrative center with satellite offices at Bundaberg and Mackay.

QLD 7   Herbert, Kennedy, Leichhardt (3)
The Divisions form the northern part of the State with common interests in tourism, mining and pastoralism. The provincial city of Cairns would provide a suitable administrative centre because of air links, with satellite offices at Mt Isa and Townsville.

WA 1   Cowan, Curtin, Moore, Perth, Stirling (5)
The Divisions encompass the northern part of Perth and could be conveniently administered from Osborne Park or Karrinyup.

WA 2   Brand, Canning, Fremantle, Swan, Tangney (5)
The Divisions encompass the southern part of Perth and could be conveniently administered from Cannington Carousel or Booragoon.

WA 3   Forrest, Kalgoorlie, O'Connor (3)
The region encompasses the State apart from Perth. It could be conveniently administered from an office in Midland with satellite offices in the provincial cities of Bunbury and Kalgoorlie and the north-western center of Karratha. It is believed that the Division of O'Connor could in any event be administered more effectively from Midland than the present location in Northam.

SA 1   Adelaide, Bonython, Makin, Port Adelaide, Sturt (5)
The region encompasses the Divisions in the western part of Adelaide, the north-south axis being considered the appropriate line for identification of two sectors within the city.

SA 2   Boothby, Hawker, Hindmarsh, Kingston, Mayo (5)
The region encompasses the Divisions in the eastern part of Adelaide together with one peripheral Division, the north-south axis being considered the appropriate line for identification of two sectors within the city.

SA 3   Barker, Grey, Wakefield (3)
The region comprises the remainder of the State, the Divisions being grouped because of the problems of stand-alone Divisions in a regionalised system and because they share common administrative enrolment and administrative problems. The regional office could be located at Port Pirie with satellite offices at Kadina and Mount Gambier.

TAS 1   Denison, Franklin (2)
The 2 Divisional Offices have been co-located in central Hobart satifactorily since 1987. The Divisions encompass Hobart and its environs and the southern rural part of the State.

TAS 2   Bass, Braddon, Lyons (3)
The Divisional Offices for Bass and Lyons have been co-located in Launceston for some years. The region would cover the northern and central parts of the State and the provincial city of Launceston. Road improvements between Burnie and Launceston have facilitated contacts and integrated the Division of Braddon covering the Northwest Coast into the Northern region.

Conduct of the Inquiry

On 29 January 1988 the then Minister for Home Affairs, Senator the Hon. Robert Ray, referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for its consideration the Report, Efficiency Scrutiny into Regionalisation.

On 8 February 1988 the Committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into the Efficiency Scrutiny Report. The Inquiry was advertised in the national press on 18 and 19 February. The Committee also wrote to all major political parties and other interested organisations inviting submissions. The Committee received some 160 submissions from the Australian Electoral Commission and AEC staff, Members of the Commonwealth Parliament, local councils, the Administrative Clerical Officers' Association, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Industrial Relations.

The Committee received submissions from the following individuals and organisations.

Submission
Number: Individual/Organisation,Date:

1   Letter dated 25 February 1988 from Mr Bruce Burton.

2   Letter dated 24 February 1988 from Australian
               Electoral Commission Brisbane Area Managers, Messrs
               K Sands and R McKay.

3   Letter dated 25 February 1988 from Keith Young.

4   Letter dated 1 March 1988 and attachment from Messrs
               K J Laverty, R P Roche and M J Kelly.

5   Letter dated 1 March 1988 from Mr Ross K Bishop.

6   Letter dated 3 March 1988 from the Shire Clerk,
               Kempsey Shire Council, Mr G R Proudfoot.

7   Letter dated 7 March 1988 from the NSW Legislative
               Assembly Member for Oxley, Mr Bruce Jeffrey.

8   Letter dated 11 March 1988 from the Town Clerk,
               Griffith City Council, Mr R H J Faulkner.

9   Letter dated 10 March 1988 and attachment from the
               Divisional Returning Officer, Division of
               Riverina-Darling, Mr Jon Bartlett.

10   Letter dated 15 March 1988 and attached submission
               from the Shire Clerk, Narrandera Shire Council, Mr K
               M Murphy.

11   Letter dated 11 March 1988 from the Mayor of Mount
               Isa, Mr Tony McGrady.

12   Letter dated 16 March 1988 from the Member for
               Gwydir, Mr Ralph Hunt, MP,

13   Letter undated from the Member for Wannon, Mr David
               Hawker, MP.

14   Letter dated 15 March 1988 and attached submission
               from the Member for Macarthur, Mr Stephen Martin,
               MP.

15   Letter dated 16 March from the Shire Clerk, Nambucca
               Shire Council, T R Port.

16   Letter dated 16 March 1988 from H P Illingworth for
               and on behalf of the Gwydir Electorate Council,
               National Party of Australia.

17   Letter dated 17 March 1988 from the Shire Clerk,
               Narrabri Shire Council, Mr C G Cotton.

18   Letter dated 16 March 1988 from the Member for
               Riverina-Darling, Mr Noel Hicks, MP.

19   Letter dated 17 March 1988 from the Member for
               Braddon, Mr Chris Miles, MP.

20   Letter dated 16 March 1988 from the Secretary, Taree
               Branch, National Party of Australia, Mrs Anita
               Corradin.

21   Letter dated 16 March 1988 and three (3) attachments
               from the Divisional Returning Officer, Division of
               Cowper, Mr Allan Wilcox.

22   Letter dated 14 March 1988 from the President,
               Pensioner Party of Australia, Mr Neil McKay.

23   Letter dated 14 March 1988 from the President, Dalby
               Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr Leith Tebbit.

24   Letter dated 14 March 1988 and two (2) attachments
               from the Town Clerk, Coffs Harbour City Council, P R
               Harvey.

25   Letter dated 18 March 1988 from the Town Clerk,
               Hastings Municipal Council, R Bray.

26	Letter dated 18 March 1988 and attached submission from the Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, Dr Colin A Hughes.
27	Letter dated 18 March 1988 and attached two (2) submissions from the Assistant Commissioner, Development and Research Branch, Australian Electoral Commission, Ms Jan Woodward.
28	Letter dated 18 March 1988 from the Shire Clerk, Barraba Shire Council, G G Kellett.
29	Letter dated 18 March 1988 from the Secretary, Shires Association of NSW, W A Henningham.
30	Letter dated 16 March 1988 and attachment from the Member for Lyne, Mr Bruce Cowan, MP.
31	Letter dated 18 March 1988 from the Town Clerk, City of Broken Hill, A J Dwyer.
32-115	Eighty-four (84) letters dated 15 March 1988 in standard format lodged by concerned businessmen of Dalby, Queensland.
116	Letter dated 17 March 1988 from Ms Petrina Dorrington, North West Queensland Tourism and Development Board.
117	Letter dated 18 March 1988 from Shire Clerk, Gunnedah Shire Council, I D Horwood.
118	Letter dated 18 March 1988 from R Manning, Narrandera, NSW.
119	Letter dated 17 March 1988 and submission from National Secretary, Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association, AGE, Mr Peter Robson.
120	Letter and attachment from the Member for Cowper, Mr Garry Nehl, MP.
121	Letter dated 16 March 1988 from the Tasmanian Minister for Health, Mr F Roger Groom.
122	Letter dated 17 March 1988 from the Member for Menzies, the Hon. N A Brown, QC., MP.
123	Letter dated 14 March 1988 from the Administration Director, National Party of Australia - Queensland, Mr H L Maybury.
124	Letter dated 18 March 1988 and submission from Mr Alex Stanelos.

125	Letter dated 16 March 1988 and submission from the Member for Linsday, Mr Ross Free, MP.
126	Letter dated 23 March 1988 from the Shire Clerk, Great Lakes Shire Council, Mr Rex Mooney.
127	Letter dated 17 March 1988 and submission from the Divisional Returning Officer, Division of Brisbane, B C Goodwin.
128	Letter dated 22 March 1988 from the Town Clerk, Greater Taree City Council, C E Chatwood.
129	Letter dated 16 March 1988 from the Member for Braddon and Speaker of the Tasmanian House of Assembly, Mr Ronald Cornish, MHA.
130	Letter dated 14 March 1988 from the Member for Shortland, Mr Peter Morris, MHR.
131	Letter dated 16 March 1988 and 2 attachments from Senator Brian R Archer.
132	Letter dated 24 March 1988 from the Leader of the National Party of Australia, the Right Hon. Ian Sinclair, MP.
133	Letter dated 21 March 1988 from the Town Clerk, City of Sale, Mr John L Low.
134	Letter dated 3 March 1988 from the Managing Director, Roy Morgan Research Centre Pty Ltd, Mr Gary Morgan.
	W D Scott Co Pty Ltd., Review of the Structure, Systems and Facilities of the Australian Electoral Office, November 1974.
135	Letter dated 29 March 1988 from the Member for Hinkler, Mr Brian Courtice, MP.
136	Letter dated 28 March 1988 and two attachments from the Divisional Returning Officer, Division of Wide Bay, Qld, G A Grant.
137	Letter dated 5 April 1988 from the Shire Clerk, Bingara Shire Council, P J Henry.
138	Letter dated 8 April 1988 from the Shire Clerk, Moree Plains Shire Council, M J O'Reilly.
139	Letter dated 9 April 1988 from the Member for Corio, the Hon. Gordon Scholes, MP.

140   Letter dated 18 April 1988 from the Federal
Director of the Liberal Party of Australia,
Mr Tony Eggleton and a joint submission from
the Liberal and National Parties.

141   Letter dated 27 April 1988 from the Chairman,
East Gippsland Regional Consultative Council,
K B Hollands.

142   Letter dated 5 May 1988 and submission from
the Secretary, Department of Industrial Relations,
Mr R M Taylor.

143   Letter dated 11 May 1988 from the Assistant
Secretary, Portfolio Support Branch, Department
of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism
and Territories.

144   Letter dated 2 May 1988 from the Member for
Streeton, Mr Tony Lamb.

145   Letter dated 28 April 1988 and four attachments
from the Australian Electoral Commissioner,
Dr Colin Hughes.

Attachments:

.   AEC Program Budget statement

.   Price Waterhouse Report (1983)

.   AEC ADP Strategic Plan (1985)

.   AEC ADP Strategic Plan (1986)

146   Letter dated 3 May 1988 and five attachments from
the Australian Electoral Commissioner, Dr Colin
Hughes.

Attachments:

.   Overview of Existing Computer Facilities in the
Australian Electoral Commission

.   Computer Services Aspects

.   Provision of postal voting facilities in the
Division of Kennedy at the 1987 Election

.   Rationales for proposed combinations of
Divisions into regions

.   Restructuring provisions of the Commonwealth
Electoral Act 1918

147   Letter dated 10 May 1988 and an attachment from the
Australian Electoral Commissioner, Dr Colin Hughes.

Attachment:

.   Cost of Regionalisation Plan set out in
AEC Submission

148   Letter dated 19 May 1988 and an attachment from the
Australian Electoral Commissioner, Dr Colin Hughes.

Attachment:

.   Enrolment systems in other countries

149   Letter dated 23 May 1988 and an attachment from the
Australian Electoral Commissioner, Dr Colin Hughes.

Attachment:

.   Divisional Returning Officers' School Visits
(January 1987 - March 1988)

150   Letter dated 29 April 1988 and an attachment from
the Divisional Returning Officer for Lyne,
B D Hoare.

151   Letter dated 9 June 1988 from Senator John Watson.

152   Letter dated 6 June 1988 and attached submission
from the First Assistant Secretary, Department of
Finance, Mr E R Thorn.

153   Letter dated 20 May 1988 from the Secretary,
Maryborough Branch of the National Party,
Mrs J Burton

154   Letter dated 3 June 1988 from the State President,
National Party of Australia - Queensland,
Sir Robert Sparkes

155   Letter dated 17 June 1988 and attachment from the
Australian Electoral Commissioner, Dr Colin A Hughes

156   Letter dated 17 June 1988 and attachment from the
Australian Electoral Commission, Ms Dianne Saunders

157   Letter dated 22 July 1988 and an attached copy of a
petition from the Member for Braddon,
Mr Chris Miles, MP

158	Letter dated 18 July 1988 from the Deputy Premier of Tasmania, the Hon. Geoffrey Pearsall, MHA
159	Letter dated 24 June 1988 and attachments from the Australian Electoral Commissioner, Dr Colin A Hughes
	. AEC's Corporate Information Technology Report
	. Department of Finance's Corporate Information Technology Planning Guidelines (October 1987)
160	Letter dated 5 October 1988 and attachments from the Australian Electoral Commissioner, Dr Colin A Hughes

The Committee held five public hearings as part of its Inquiry into the Review of the Efficiency Scrutiny Report into Regionalisation within the Australian Electoral Commission, viz.:

- Canberra: Wednesday, 6 April 1988;

- Canberra: Tuesday, 10 May 1988;

- Canberra: Wednesday, 11 May 1988;

- Canberra: Monday, 23 May 1988; and

- Melbourne: Thursday, 16 June 1988.

The witnesses who appeared before the Committee at these hearings were:

Canberra: Wednesday, 6 April 1988

- Dr Colin Anfield Hughes, Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, Canberra, ACT

- Mr Colin Gordon Ball, Australian Electoral Officer for Tasmania, Australian Electoral Commission, Hobart, TAS

- Mr Andrejs Cirulis, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission, Canberra, ACT

- Mr Philip John Skinner, Assistant Commissioner, Corporate Services, Australian Electoral Commission, Canberra, ACT

- Mr Barry George Young, Australian Electoral Officer for Western Australia, Australian Electoral Commission, Perth, WA

Canberra: Tuesday, 10 May 1988

- Mr Neil Anthony Brown, QC, MP, Member for Menzies

- Mr Brian William Courtice, MP, Member for Hinkler

- Mr Noel Jeffrey Hicks, MP, Member for Riverina-Darling

- Mr Stephen Paul Martin, MP, Member for Macarthur

- Mr Christopher Gordon Miles, MP, Member for Braddon

- The Hon. Mr Gordon Glen Denton Scholes, MP, Member for Corio

Canberra: Wednesday, 11 May 1988

- Mr Christopher Leonard Cunnew, Workplace Delegate, Administrative and Clerical Officers Association, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW

- Mr Desmond Joseph Edwards, Department Shire President, Narrandera Shire Council, Narrandera, NSW

- Mr Bruce Crosley Goodwin, Everton Park, Brisbane, QLD

- Mr Tony Hewson, Workplace Delegate, Administrative and Clerical Officers Association, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW

- Mr Ken Murphy, Shire Clerk, Narrandera Shire Council, Narrandera, NSW

- Ms Julie Pagonis, National Industrial Officer, Administrative and Clerical Officers Association, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW

- Mr John Reginald Scutts, Workplace Delegate, Administrative and Clerical Officers Association, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW

- Mr Francis Xavier Vassallo, Workplace Delegate, Administrative and Clerical Officers Association, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW

Canberra: Monday, 23 May 1988

- Mr David Peter Maxwell, MP, Member for Wannon

- Mr Garry Barr Nehl, MP, Member for Cowper

Melbourne: Thursday, 16 June 1988

- Mr Terence Gerald Brosnan, Assistant Secretary,
  Legislation Branch, Department of Industrial
  Relations, Canberra, ACT

- Mr Alan Anderson Chapple, Assistant Secretary, Pay
  and Classifications Division, Department of
  Industrial Relations, Canberra, ACT

- Dr Colin Anfield Hughes, Electoral Commissioner,
  Australian Electoral Commission, Canberra, ACT

- Mr Michael Charles Maley, Director, Computer
  Services, Australian Electoral Commission,
  Canberra, ACT

- Miss Dianne Maree Saunders, Deputy Australian
  Electoral Officer for Victoria, 399 Lonsdale
  Street, Melbourne, VIC

- Mr Brian Thornton, Assistant Secretary, Department
  of Finance, Canberra, ACT

- Mr Edward John Williams, Chief Finance Officer,
  Department of Finance, Canberra, ACT