



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

BILLS

**Electoral and Referendum Amendment
(Improving Electoral Administration) Bill 2013**

In Committee

SPEECH

Monday, 18 March 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Monday, 18 March 2013
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Questioner
Speaker McLucas, Sen Jan

Source Senate
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Senator McLUCAS (Queensland—Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers and Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister) (13:40): The amendments being proposed to the Taxation Administration Act 1953 implement recommendation No. 3 of the 2010 report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters following the general election. This amendment simply enables the Electoral Commissioner to receive personal information that was supplied to the Australian Taxation Office and use that information to commence a process of enrolment with that information. The ATO information will be used alongside other sources of information, including Centrelink and drivers licence information, as well as the direct enrolment and direct update of enrolment provisions legislated by this place during 2012. These provisions are currently being implemented across Australia and allow the Electoral Commissioner to write to electors advising of his proposal to enrol an elector at a particular address. The elector then has 28 days to confirm or dispute the proposed action. Following the 28-day period, the Electoral Commissioner determines the appropriate enrolment action, including, when an elector does not respond, undertaking the proposed enrolment action.

ATO information through this process will be subject to all the same stringent checks undertaken with all enrolment activity aimed at ensuring and maintaining the existing very high level of integrity of the electoral roll. ATO information represents another source of information that will assist in identifying and enrolling eligible Australians, particularly younger Australians. The amendment does not allow the provision of anyone's financial information to the Australian Electoral Commission. This information is, of course, not needed for enrolment purposes. The AEC will not be the first Commonwealth agency to receive personal information from the ATO; other agencies also receive data for their purposes, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and Customs. The government will not be supporting the amendments.