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PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

DPS ref: D22/68982

Sarah Redden  
Acting Committee Secretary  
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Redden

### **Hansard editing and corrections policy**

During the senate Estimates hearing earlier today, Senator Gallagher asked a series of questions regarding changes made to Hansard with respect to the second reading speech for the *Treasury Laws amendment (Cost of Living Support and Other Measures) Bill 2022*.

As I had taken Senator Gallagher's questions on notice, I have outlined the relevant context below to assist the Senator with understanding the actions taken by Hansard.

On Thursday 31 March 2022, the Office of Senator Hume requested that changes be made to the second reading speech delivered in the Senate to reflect the changes made in the corresponding House of Representatives speech delivered by the Hon Michael Sukkar MP.

However, the changes accepted by Hansard are in accordance with the *Hansard editing and corrections policy* (May 2019) which is available on the Department of Parliamentary Services intranet. Specifically, corrections that are acceptable to Hansard include:

**Errors of fact:** corrections to names, numbers, figures, and dates when the wrong information was originally given and the speaker has checked them since.

I have spoken with the staff directly involved with the decision making process to understand the rationale for the alterations. As senators will be aware, second reading speeches are an important aid to statutory interpretation and may be used to discern the underlying purpose or object of a statute. The acceptance of the corrections was intended to ensure the second reading speech aligns with the Bill.

Hansard staff are responsible for transcribing and editing over 20,000 pages of chamber related transcripts each year with an accuracy rate of approximately 90 per cent. Human judgements are made in real time and I am confident the decisions were made in good faith with an intent to produce a professional and accurate transcript of proceedings that align with the legislation.

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I wish to also advise the committee that I have reviewed the relevant interview of the *Insiders* program from 3 April 2022. I wish to note that there was no reference to speeches in Hansard being changed in that program or reference to concerns that would have prompted a response by me.

Yours sincerely

Rob Stefanic  
Secretary

4 April 2022

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