

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Tourism and Resources Portfolio
Budget Estimates 2006-2007, 29 May 2006

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND RESOURCES
TOPIC: PROVISION OF HEARING AUGMENTATION IN BUILDINGS
REFERENCE: HANSARD 29/05/06, PAGE E71

QUESTION No.BI-31

(Hansard 29/05/06, p.E71)

In response to questions from Senator McLucas about hearing augmentation in aged care facilities, Mr Ivan Donaldson, Executive Director of the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB), undertook to provide further information from work done by the ABCB on the design and construction of aged care facilities.

ANSWER

In aged care facilities, the current version of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) requires a hearing augmentation system, such as a hearing loop, to be installed in the locations when an inbuilt amplification system is used such as in conference or meeting rooms larger than 100m² and in public assembly auditoria.

The BCA also provides a range of options for the construction of aged care facilities depending on the level of care required by the residents, which ranges from hostels that provide independent living environments, through to high-care level facilities similar to hospitals. The fire safety levels required in the different building types are commensurate with the needs of the residents. The BCA regulates the level of fire safety through the provision of things such as smoke detection, exit doors, fire-isolated stairs, sprinkler systems and widths of exits.

QUESTION No.BI-32

(Hansard 29/05/06, p.E71)

Senator McLucas asked about:

Can you provide a list of the areas in which the question of provision of hearing augmentation has occurred?

ANSWER

The current version of the BCA requires a hearing augmentation system, such as a hearing loop, to be installed in the following locations when an inbuilt amplification system is used:

- conference or meeting rooms larger than 100m²;
- rooms used for judicatory purposes;
- auditoria of public assembly buildings including schools, theatres and cinemas; and
- ticket offices, teller's booths and reception areas where the public is screened from the service provider.

In addition to the above, screens or scoreboards capable of displaying public announcements at public venues must be capable of supplementing any public address system.