

**SENATE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2006-07 – HEARING 12 FEBRUARY 2007**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**P4: HANSARD, P.12 - SENATOR MURRAY**

**Statement of reasonable minimum time for a committee inquiry on a bill**

**Answer:** The following time line is regarded as a reasonable minimum for each stage of a bill inquiry given a reporting time of 27 days (the average time for a bill inquiry in 2005-06). On this time line 8 days - 3 and 4, 10 and 11, 17 and 18, 24 and 25 - are weekends and are not working days for those outside the parliamentary environment.

**Day 1** - Initial committee meeting to make decisions on conduct of inquiry, set date for hearings and deadline for submissions (secretariat to develop list of potential witnesses, examine bill and associated documents including Bills Digest and Scrutiny of Bills Committee comment)

**Day 2** – secretariat to organise advertisement of inquiry and letters seeking submissions

**Day 3** – weekend

**Day 4** – weekend

**Day 5** – secretariat commences work on report – outline of bill and introductory material (basis for briefing paper for committee), contact potential witnesses, organise venues, travel and other administration for public hearings

**Day 6** – as above, process early submissions

**Day 7** – as above

**Day 8** – as above

**Day 9** – deadline for submissions, submissions arrive en masse

**Day 10** – weekend

**Day 11** – weekend

**Day 12** – secretariat to process submissions and organise witnesses for public hearings, in consultation with Chair and committee

**Day 13** – secretariat to prepare meeting papers for hearing

**Day 14** – as above

**Day 15** – public hearing

**Day 16** – draft report while awaiting Hansard (while Hansard can be provided on 24 hour turnaround it is more reasonable to factor in the three day turnaround)

**Day 17** – weekend, as above if necessary

**Day 18** – as above

**Day 19** – draft report while awaiting Hansard, organise meeting to consider report

**Day 20** – finalise report – insert Hansard quotes

**Day 21** – provide early draft to Chair

**Day 22** – edit and proof read report awaiting Chair's input

**Day 23** – discuss report with Chair, make amendments and provide to committee members for consideration meeting

**Day 24** – weekend, secretariat to work on editing and proofreading draft

**Day 25** – weekend as above

**Day 26** – meeting to consider report, Secretariat to work late to make necessary amendments and process any additional comments, dissenting reports etc.

**Day 27** – printing and tabling

These dates are indicative and flexible. Frequently, a committee may make a decision to give witnesses more time to prepare submissions and will hold the hearing at a later date. This will obviously affect the rest of the time line, as will the Chair's availability to consider the draft report and make comments to be incorporated by the secretariat. The secretariat's work will depend on factors such as the complexity of the inquiry, the number of submissions.

The time line may also alter if it is clear from the public hearing that there is no possibility of a unanimous report, when every effort will be made by the secretariat to shorten the time lines so that other committee members may have more time to prepare dissenting reports or additional comments.