

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation  
Committee—Additional Budget Estimates February 2007**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Parliamentary Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary  
Services**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Topic:** *Hansard* index

**Question P12 F&PA38**

**Senator FAULKNER**—I ask on notice if we could have a copy of the draft response that is being prepared by Ms Missingham.

**Answer**

The minute from Ms Missingham regarding the index to the *Hansard* bound volumes, together with the original complaint from a number of Library staff members, is attached.



## Minute

Contact officer: Roxanne Missingham                      Date: 26 February 2007  
Tel no: 7102    Ref no:

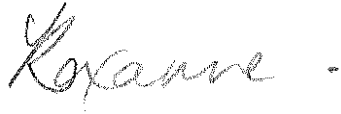
---

Hilary Penfold QC  
Secretary

### Index to Hansard bound volumes

- 1 Further to discussion on the production of the index to Hansard bound volumes I attach a minute from staff of the Parliamentary Library regarding the need for the index.
- 2 I consider that while bound volumes of Hansard are produced, it is essential to have an index in each bound volume to enable them to be used effectively.
- 3 The Australian Parliament's Hansard has included an index with the bound volumes since it commenced in 1901. The index has been heavily used by researchers in many Australian libraries, particularly national, state and university libraries. Access has also been enhanced by a complete table of contents at the beginning of each volume.
- 4 The availability of Hansard electronically through the Parlinfo has greatly increased the ability of those with internet access to use Hansards wherever they are located. The current Parlinfo system is in process of being replaced to use newer and better technologies. While it may offer the ability to search Hansard, including the information available in bound volume Hansards, having the index with bound volumes provides significant benefits to users including:
  - (a) Providing effective use of the bound volumes through the co—location of an index with text;
  - (b) Effective access to debates and discussions in Parliament over time through the relatively consistent indexing; and
  - (c) Access to Parliamentary debates without requiring use of the Internet, which may only be available on a limited or charged basis in some libraries.
- 5 Production of an index for the bound volumes should occur in a manner that enables all the information to be searchable through the online search service and through an electronic version of the bound volume copy of the index.

6 In summary I support the production of an index with each bound volume, including retrospective production of an index for the 2005 bound volumes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roxanne".

Roxanne Missingham  
Parliamentary Librarian



## Minute

Contact officer: Judy Hutchinson  
Tel no: 2648

Date: 16 February 2007  
Ref no:

---

Secretary  
through Parliamentary Librarian  
cc: A/S IAB, A/S RB

### **Hansard: indexing of bound volumes**

1 This minute seeks to set on record the concerns of Parliamentary Library staff who work at the Central Enquiry Point (CEP) regarding the cessation of indexing of bound volumes of Hansard, and to offer our assistance with setting goals for an enhanced indexing regime as indexing is re-introduced.

#### **Background**

2 Providing an index to Speeches and Subjects for each bound volume of Hansard is considered by Library staff to be part of a public service providing access to the debates of Parliament to those within the Parliament and to members of the public.

3 As primary users of the bound volumes, staff are disappointed not to have been consulted before indexing ceased; and correspondingly enthusiastic to take this opportunity to provide feedback to you on possible enhancements to the standard and content of future indices.

#### **Issues**

4 Parliamentary Library staff note that the published volumes for the current (41st) Parliament do not have a consolidated contents page, nor an index. Each volume is a compilation of daily Hansards, with pagination commencing at p. 1 for each day. The spine title provides only the indication of the date range covered, e.g., 16 November – 9 December 2004.

5 On the verso of each title page of each daily Hansard bound into each volume there is a note: For searching purposes use <http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au>

6 Previously, the bound volumes of Hansard had one title page for each volume, a running page number for the whole parliament (e.g., pp. 1 – 33122), and an Index to Speeches and Subjects was provided for each sitting period within the Parliament; that is, three indices per year. Thus, the print version was complete in itself without reference to a separate online searching tool.

7 While there may be merit in issuing the bound volumes of Hansard as facsimiles of the internet-published daily Hansards, there is no merit in publishing vast compilations without providing an index to the contents.

8 Staff concerns are that without an index the bound volumes no longer stand alone as a useable record of debate in Parliament and readers need to use the internet as a searching aid; this defeats the purpose of providing a bound volume. In addition, the current version of ParlInfo Web provides keyword searching which is an inadequate substitute for a subject-based index.

9 Parliamentary Library staff are offering to contribute suggestions towards cost effective enhancements, and propose to work on providing a prioritised list of suggestions within a fortnight, for example, adding subject indexing of Adjournment Speeches and MPIs.

10 Re-introducing indexing of bound volumes will provide an opportunity for enhancements to the standard of previous indices and to the general format and layout of the printed volumes. Among other side benefits might be the publishing of the indices on the internet which would enhance accessibility to the Web version of Hansard.

#### Recommendations

- 11 Parliamentary Library staff working at the CEP:
- (a) support proposals that indexing of the bound volumes of Hansard be reinstated;
  - (b) offer to provide suggestions for new enhanced standards for indices, format and layout to printed volumes of Hansard; and
  - (c) recommend that indices to Hansard be published on the internet thus improving access to the online as well as the print version of debates.

Judy Hutchinson

Jerome Hutchinson

Margaret Cayton

Ray Jordan

Colleen Noddy

Inaya Kuroppu

CEP meeting attendees

Endorsed at the CEP meeting held Wednesday 14 February 2007

L Tapstra

Rob Lennie

Andrews, Kanner

Deirdre McKeown

Shirley Myles

Ramona Roly

Elham

Barbara Harris

Al Sew