SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA

Question No. 172

Senator Ludwig asked the following question in writing at the hearing on 24 May 2007:

Workload and Vacancies
a) For the years 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 (to date):
    i) For all judicial vacancies in that year, provide the length of time before that position was filled (and indicate whether or not it was filled by another judge or a magistrate appointed to the FMC).

b) Is there a breakdown available for target workloads which judges are expected to perform their various roles (i.e. sitting on trials, writing judgments, etc.)?
    i) If not, why not?
    ii) If so, please provide for 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 (to date).

c) Is there a breakdown available for the average workloads which judges are expected to perform their various roles (ie. sitting on trials, writing judgments, etc.)?
    i) If not, why not?
    ii) If so, please provide for 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 (to date).

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

a) i) The vacancies on the High Court in 2003 (following the retirement of Justice Gaudron) and 2005 (following the retirement of Justice McHugh) were filled immediately.

b) No.

    i) It is not necessary to devise target workloads for the Justices of the High Court. The Justices of the High Court hear cases as a Full Court on the dates allocated in advance as Full Court sitting dates throughout the year. During non sitting periods the Justices write reserved judgments and sit as single Justices to hear single Justice applications.

    ii) Not applicable.

c) No.

    i) It is not necessary to devise target workloads for the Justices of the High Court. The Justices of the High Court hear cases as a Full Court on the dates allocated as Full Court sitting dates throughout the year. During non sitting periods the Justices write reserved judgments and sit as single Justices to hear single Justice applications.

    ii) Not applicable.