
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PRACTICE

SEVENTH EDITION

Editor

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TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Preface

When the sixth edition of *House of Representatives Practice* was published in 2012, it captured a number of significant developments that resulted from the first minority government since 1940. Of course the minority government continued until the middle of 2013 and there were more developments that were not captured in the previous edition which are now referred to in this edition.

However, if we believed that a reversion to majority government in the House would see procedural developments slow down we would have been mistaken. This Parliament, the 45th Parliament, with the very narrow majority enjoyed by the Government has brought a number of more unusual procedural occurrences which are recorded in this edition. It also has seen the issues emerge about the eligibility of parliamentarians under section 44(i) of the Constitution, with a number of Senators and a Member of the House being disqualified by the High Court of Australia sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns. The issue of the dual citizenship of parliamentarians continues to play out as this edition draws to its conclusion with developments up until 10 May 2018.

House of Representatives Practice is relied on by all those who participate in, and follow, the work of the House as the authoritative source of the practice of the House. Its words are poured over in great detail and are recited with great authority. It is therefore incumbent on us to ensure that *House of Representatives Practice* reflects the best and most current thinking on key issues of practice. It is very interesting to see the subtle shifts that have occurred as the procedure and practice of the House changes in response to the dynamic circumstances that face the House. This becomes most evident if one compares this edition with the first edition edited by one of my predecessors as Clerk, Mr John Pettifer C.B.E., who unfortunately passed away in 2014. I am of course grateful to all my predecessors as Clerks who have left their own imprint on *House of Representatives Practice*.

Some of the more notable and obvious changes in this edition include a more accurate rebadging of the chapter on ‘Disagreements between the Houses’ as ‘Double dissolutions and joint sittings’; the division of the increasingly large chapter on ‘Parliamentary committees’ into two chapters; and the addition of a chapter dedicated to the ‘Federation Chamber’ now that the second chamber has been in existence for more than 20 years.

Many staff of the Department have made a contribution to this new edition of *House of Representatives Practice* and I thank them all for their efforts. I particularly thank my senior colleagues in the Department and make special note of Claressa Surtees, the Deputy Clerk, and Catherine Cornish, the Clerk Assistant (Procedure). As with all editions of *House of Representatives Practice* since the 2nd edition, Peter Fowler has coordinated this edition and has contributed much of the new content and seen it through to final publication. I and the Department owe a particular debt to Peter for the way in which he has carried the primary responsibility for the production of the Department’s central publication.

I hope that Members, staff and others continue to find this new edition of *House of Representatives Practice* as helpful as earlier editions have been and that it brings new insights into the latest developments in the House's practice and procedures.

David Elder
Clerk of the House
May 2018

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