

Appendix 4



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
SENATOR THE HONOURABLE SCOTT RYAN

REF: D19/19667

Senator Sue Lines
Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Procedure
Suite SG.44
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Chair

Reference of matters to the Senate Standing Committee on Procedure

I have received a letter from the Manager of Opposition Business, Senator O'Neill, asking that I refer two matters to the Procedure Committee, pursuant to standing order 17(3). Those matters involve:

- suspending the sittings of the Senate to enable senators to attend the presentation of the annual Closing the Gap statement, and
- the transcription of Indigenous Australian languages into Hansard.

I am happy to refer the two matters, as requested. A copy of Senator O'Neill's letter is attached.

Yours sincerely

SCOTT RYAN

13 March 2019



Senator Deborah O'Neill
NEW SOUTH WALES

Monday, 25 February 2019

Dear Mr President,

In accordance with standing order 17(3), I request that the following matters be referred to the Procedure Committee:

Closing the Gap Statement

A resolution, or amendment to the existing continuing order relating to parliamentary consideration of the Closing the Gap report, requiring that the sittings of the Senate be suspended for the presentation in the House of the annual Closing the Gap Statement:

That each year, on the day on which the Prime Minister presents the annual report on progress in meeting the 'Closing the Gap' targets, the sitting of the Senate be suspended 30 minutes prior to the time set for the presentation of the report in the House of Representatives, until the ringing of the bells, to enable senators to attend.

Indigenous Languages and Hansard

When committees take evidence in Indigenous languages that the Hansard record of proceedings recorded the language in which the evidence was given, the Indigenous language, as well as an English translation. An amendment to the standing orders along the following lines may achieve that end:

At the end of standing order 35, add:

(3) *If evidence is heard by a committee in an Indigenous Australian language the transcript of that evidence shall record both:*

(a) *the evidence as submitted in the Indigenous Australian language; and*

(b) *an English translation of the evidence.*

The phrase 'Indigenous Australian language' has been used noting that it appears to be the term used by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

In addition, alongside this amendment the following resolution expressing a preference that the transcription of the evidence as submitted and its translation be supported by the witness or a person from their community, along the following lines:

The Senate resolves that, where a committee has heard evidence in an Indigenous Australian language, the transcription by Hansard staff of the evidence as submitted, and its translation into English, should be assisted by the person who gave the evidence or a person from their community.

Yours sincerely,

SENATOR DEBORAH O'NEILL

