



Ms Lyn Beverley
Committee Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverley

**Response to Question on Notice 125—Supplementary Budget Estimates
November 2013 – Additional information**

Please find attached 29 pages of feedback to the Hansard Trial Report that had inadvertently not been included in the answer to Question on Notice 125 from the Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing on 18 November 2013.

Please accept my apology for this omission.

Yours sincerely

~~Jenny Teece~~
Assistant Secretary
Strategy and Performance Branch

25.2.2014



Attachment E: Feedback from Hansard staff

Hansard editors were asked to provide feedback on the trial using the following feedback form. Editors submitted their feedback via email or by printing it and placing a copy in a box provided for this purpose. All of the feedback has been copied to this attachment. The feedback appears in no particular order. The feedback received via email appears first, and it is followed by scanned copies of the feedback placed in the box.

Reproduction of the feedback form sent to staff

FEEDBACK – CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 – 27, 2013

During the two week sitting period of June 17 – June 27, 2013, Hansard editors will not be present in either chamber, except during designated periods of Question Time. This trial is being conducted to assess the impact of not having a Hansard editor present during chamber proceedings, and where a central log will be produced outside the chamber. In order to comprehensively review this change in the way Hansard has historically produced a chamber log, feedback is being sought from editors, clerks, senators and members. Emphasis for assessing the trial will focus on accuracy and timeliness of transcripts, and editor experience.

Your feedback on the trial will be crucial in assessing the overall result.

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial, that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it?

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted timeframe? If not, why not?

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience – if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

FEEDBACK — CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 — 27, 2013

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial, that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

Yes.

That the quality of the transcript will be impacted, because interjections would not be captured. Therefore responses to interjections would not make sense.

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

Yes. And outstripped.

Parlview has absolutely zero ability to capture interjections. All it shows is the person speaking.

Here is one I got when I was in the chamber doing a log - which of course would not be there if there was no-one in there. It was not on the audio or parlview:

Mr Dutton: This is nothing about climate science. It is all about you, as per usual!

Mr OAKESHOTT: I hope Hansard has recorded that. I hope Hansard has recorded a senior shadow minister in a rage about bipartisanship on climate science, a position confirmed by their leader yesterday—shaking of head today, rants and interjections. The position of party leaders is clear

Nothing major, but clearly the members are confident this will all get recorded.

How is this trial supposed to be assessed? How is management (or anyone?) going to discover what was missed if it isn't recorded anywhere? What I mean is: how do we know what impact not being in the chamber will have on the transcript because the only place that stuff appears is ... in the transcript ... because we are in the chamber. So.... If we are not in the chamber... how will anyone know what we missed by not being in the chamber?!

If there is a good reason for us NOT to be in the chamber, fine. What is it? Where is the evidence? How can we tell if this aim has been achieved? Isn't this basic stuff that management gets paid the \$ for?

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it? No.

Sometimes there was no log at all. This meant it took a lot longer to work out what was going on.

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted timeframe? If not, why not?

Generally, yes, but it was trickier and more annoying.

A large problem is that the members and senators were less inclined to provide notes and if they did provide notes, they turned up at Hansard too late to be of use. This has an impact on how quickly and easily we can complete our turns. It is not an efficient way of doing things.

Especially with adjournment speeches, where they recite a lot of names of non-famous people (and then they go home to bed so you can't ring them), or in valedictories, where you really want to spell the name of the person's pet or third cousin correctly, but it is not the kind of thing you will find anywhere on the internet.

I assume members and senators were less inclined to provide notes because Hansard wasn't there asking the attendants for them and the attendants didn't think we wanted them because we weren't there asking for them.

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

Yes. There is no way of identifying anyone speaking who does not have the floor. There is also the issue that broadcasting does not always get the mic on at the right time. If you are in the chamber you can capture what was said.

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

Occasionally, with valedictories and with adjournment speeches - because no notes were provided.

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

Parview is completely irrelevant to Hansard being in the chamber or not. It does not tell you anything further than what is on the audio plus the Live minutes.

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience - if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

I don't think it did. Going to the chamber is a good thing to do from a WHS perspective, but one can just as easily go for a five minute walk around the building every hour instead. BUT: The assumption seems to be that walking to the chamber will mean that we can do more turns in less time and therefore save money by not paying as much overtime. Which doesn't make any sense because we are not supposed to be doing more turns according to the WHS report.

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

There was nothing clear about why it was happening. The whole thing was kind of insulting because it shows that the secretary and other management don't understand how our job works and what we actually do. The secretary told the world at estimates that we have a 'voice over' to refer to on the audio (not true) and that we have access to eight camera angles to see what is going on in the chamber (not true) - broadcasting might have 8 cameras; Parview just shows the same as everyone else - the person talking. You can't swivel a camera toward the voice you heard over your left shoulder. Even if the secretary's errors were later corrected (were they?), all anyone will remember is what she said live in front of the TV cameras.

So, what was the trial for?

- Was it to save DPS money? (How? - the explanation given by the secretary made no sense)
- Was it because a specific member or senator doesn't like us in there? Why?
- Was it because the computer screen was too high in the committee stage in the senate? Tell everyone in Hansard to keep the screen down low. Get the temporary chairman a taller chair.
- How exactly would not having Hansard there achieve any of the above aims anyway?
- Was it because 'It looks like Hansard aren't doing anything in the chamber, just sitting there. They pay Hansard to do nothing, while everyone in the public service is tightening their belt or getting the sack!' (So educate people about what we are there for! Stand up for us!) 'What about the chamber attendants? Most of their job is filling glasses of water - why can't the politicians get their own water? Wouldn't that save more money?' 'What about the clerks? They spend most of their life just sitting there.' 'If we want to save money, why don't we have fewer managers? They don't even edit. They spend their lives doing rosters. Can't an APS3 do that for a lot less money?' Educate people, don't just give in to mindless whims. You see my point?)

As with all changes to quality assurance with Hansard (no subbing of committees, no logging in FC, no hard copy editing, no managers who edit; no auditing of errors; no follow-up of errors; no style committee, no guidance or leadership on style, training or quality; reliance on typists), I am concerned that real stakeholders throughout are not really identified or consulted.

When we express concern that the quality of Hansard is deteriorating, we are always told by management: 'the stakeholders aren't complaining'; 'nobody cares if you use a hyphen or not'. BUT the only stakeholders that seem to count are senators and members. And the only feedback that seems to count is how much they bully Hansard about how to spell judgement/judgment.

Members and senators are not the only stakeholders. Stakeholders include: committee members, members of the public, the secretariat, public servants, judges, lawyers, historians, children, students, foreign governments (and stakeholders include people who

haven't even been born yet.) But most people have their own jobs to do (and probably don't bother complaining no matter what errors they find and us editors wouldn't hear about it if they did); they rely on Hansard to uphold the quality and to do our job. Hansard is held up and relied upon by all the stakeholders to maintain a good product. Members and senators say this all the time. They trust us. They think we are getting all the interjections. They think we will spell all the names right. They rely on us to understand what they meant to say and to show that in the transcript. They trust us. They think we care about the quality and accuracy of the transcript. And we are slowly losing that trust.

FEEDBACK – CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 – 27, 2013

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

I expected that there would be some cases where the context and thus sense of responses to interjections would be lost because the words of the interjection would be inaudible and/or the identity of the interjector would be unknown.

I expected that lack of immediate access to members and senators' speaking notes might affect the accuracy of our transcript. I was also worried that on occasions the chamber attendants might neglect to collect notes for us altogether.

I thought that there might occasionally be some confusion about who was speaking, what was going on and who was in the chair.

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

Yes. Although interjections are disorderly, responses to them do form part of the transcript. I felt unable to identify interjectors in the transcript, even if they were identified by the responder. In the Senate on Thursday, 27 June, at around 23:31, Senator Ian Macdonald pointedly said: 'I will take that interjection. I hope Hansard got that. You are on my side, Senator Farrell. Thank you for the interjection.' Of course, I was unable to include the text of the interjection or the identity of the interjector, not least because, after further interjection, Senator Macdonald corrected himself to say Senator Feeney instead of Senator Farrell. I could perhaps have taken his word for it, but in the circumstances I was advised not to by an assistant director. In this case, the interjection might not have been significant, but the speaker with the call had responded to it and specifically expressed the hope that the interjection would be recorded by Hansard.

Notes arrived too late to be of as much use as they could have been. They could not be scanned and used as the basic text for editing. On one occasion I noticed from the TV broadcast that a senator was reading from notes containing quotes, names etc. and knew I would need the notes if they were available. I went to the Senate antechamber to get them but the attendant did not bother to collect the notes when the senator finished speaking. He got them for me when I asked him to, but if no editor had been there we would have missed out. This happened to another editor too, who noticed on the TV broadcast that an attendant had neglected to collect the notes. He rang the antechamber and asked them to collect the notes. This created some friction with the attendants and would not have been necessary if an editor had been in the chamber or antechamber as a visual or verbal reminder.

Speaking of notes, I noticed a few comments on the feedback pad in the Senate logging room about there being no need for them. I strongly disagree and suggest that people should be checking against the notes more often than they do, even if there is apparently no problem with the transcript. As one small example from last week, one speaker used the word 'through' in a speech, when it was clear from his notes that he meant to say 'thorough'. Both words were possible in the context, but without referring to the notes I would have used the wrong word.

Generally it was obvious who was speaking because they were given the call by the chair. However it was not always obvious who was in the chair. On the last Friday in the Senate, the roster of occupants of the chair contained a couple of time slots that were 'TBC', and the television view of the chair, on channel 28, was so blurry and small that the occupant could not be identified.

In the Senate on Monday, 17 June, at around 18:26, a senator stood up at the end of presentation of committee reports (which were presented in a large batch) and asked whether a particular report that was on the Red had been presented or not. The senator who had tabled the reports had not mentioned this report in the list that they read out. I could not

hear whether the response was yes or no, and the Senate moved on to the next item. For my turn, I followed the advice of the Dynamic Red, which was that the report had been tabled, and, on further close listening, I was able to hear a very faint 'Yes, it was covered in that last group,' but it took me a while trying to work it out, and I can foresee similar problems occurring in future.

This was not something I had foreseen as a likely problem, but on one day when there were multiple consecutive divisions I by chance discovered that we had missed out one division out altogether. The turn after mine had been nilled, presumably by someone who had skipped through the sound quickly and had thus not heard the division. They presumably had also failed to look at the Senate log, where the division had been recorded. I listened ahead to find a join and discovered that there was in fact a division in the nilled turn. Obviously this was an editor error, but it was an error that would not have happened if the editor had been in the chamber. I believe that on at least one occasion the transcript was published with a division missing and Scott and HSU staff spent a lot of time trying to track down what had happened. Incidentally, the current HPS does not obviously record who nills a turn, so I am unable to give feedback about this to the person concerned.

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it?

Mostly, but, as mentioned above, occasionally the chair was unidentifiable and of course interjectors were unidentifiable.

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted timeframe? If not, why not?

Yes.

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

Of course. See my comments in point 2 about interjections and identifying the occupant of the chair.

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

No. If I did spend more time trying to identify something from the audio or video, this was offset by the time saved by not having to walk to and from the chamber and log in the chamber.

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

I stopped using Parview. The only thing I would have needed to look for were interjectors, and interjectors were unlikely to have been filmed anyway. On the few occasions I did look at Parview, I found it time consuming to get to the point I wanted. Also, on the first day, when I had Parview open, I found that Dragon was crashing on a regular basis. I'm not sure whether there was a connection, but Dragon stopped crashing when I stopped having Parview open.

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience – if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

It was not only the lack of the walk to and from the chamber that affected my work day experience; it was also not sitting in the chamber, not being able to immediately identify the

speaker and subject matter and not feeling connected to the process. This further reduction in the variety of our tasks took away some of the enjoyment of the job, which has already been reduced with the end of away logging and reduced in-house logging for editors. We now do little else but transcription.

Although being out of the chamber meant there was more time and thus less pressure to produce my turns, I found that I tended to use the time that was available. When there is a deadline to get back to the chamber, I generally start off doing the turn as fast as I can in case there is any difficulty with it as I progress. This means that if there is an easier turn I may finish sooner. With the pressure off to some extent—not having to make it back to the chamber—I tended not to rush as much as I ordinarily would. I also had some time for stretching et cetera. With the trial set up in the way it was, for those on the roster there was not so much time pressure in doing the turns. However, there was no time saving. I am concerned that the next step might be to reduce the time available for completing turns. This would mean there would still be the pressure to produce the turn in a tight time frame, without the WH&S benefit of walking to and from the chamber and sitting in the chamber, or the benefit of the extra time afforded in this trial. This could have disastrous consequences in terms of injuries to editors.

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

Having Senate loggers in the in-camera room and having the time frames for completing turns the same as usual meant that there was an efficiency loss rather than an efficiency gain from the trial. But I believe a log for the Senate is necessary so that we don't miss things like divisions. For WH&S reasons, I am strongly concerned about a possible future reduction in the time available for doing turns, so I believe it would be best to continue logging in the chamber. It provides increased accuracy, through editors having awareness of what is going on and who is speaking, as well as more timely access to notes, a better WH&S result and better job satisfaction for editors. With the trial set up in the way it was, I believe there was no advantage in editors being out of the chamber and there were some obvious disadvantages.

FEEDBACK – CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 – 27, 2013

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Emphasis for assessing the trial will focus on accuracy and timeliness of transcripts, and editor experience.

Your feedback on the trial will be crucial in assessing the overall result.

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial, that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

No.

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

N/A

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it?

N/A

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted timeframe? If not, why not?

Yes.

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

N/A

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

N/A

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

N/A

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience – if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

N/A

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

I was not impressed that some editors were being uncooperative, acting like children and were going out of their way to make the trial look like it was failing even if it was not, which is what one editor actually said to us. The trial was already going to add a little more work and stress to HSU and the actions of these people only made it worse.

In HSU we mostly experienced issues receiving paperwork from the chamber within a reasonable timeframe and did not receive some documents at all. This is something that we need to try and sort out before we go into another sitting week.

From: [name withheld] (DPS)
Sent: Thursday, 4 July 2013 6:21 PM
To: [name withheld] (DPS)
Cc: [name withheld] (DPS)
Subject: Chamber trial feedback

Hi, [name withheld]

Quick feedback on the three outstanding issues that arose for me in the chamber trial.

1. The vision mostly doesn't allow you to see people other than the person on their feet—so it doesn't let you see who is interjecting, for example, or who a speaker might be looking at when they say 'you', and these things can present significant problems for making sense of what is being said.

2. The usefulness of the log being provided by someone else for your turn can depend very much on the alertness and the experience and knowledge of the logger. This impacted on me in one turn where, near the join, the member starting quoting from the Bill Digest. This segment was densely studded with bill titles. Not knowing that it was from the Bills Digest, I started diligently transcribing, copying and pasting bill titles from the explanatory memorandum as I went so as to get them exactly right. Maybe half an hour into this the editor with the previous turn discovered that the member was quoting from the Bill Digest and kindly rang me to tell me so. An alert editor in the chamber would have put this on the log, or given me the nudge at changeover; if it had been in my turn, I would have realised that it was a quote. This kind of thing is routinely picked up when an experienced editor is in the chamber, with half-hour logging stints with an inexperienced editor in the chair, not so much—probably understandably.

As to WH&S, it was noticeable that there were fewer prompts to get up from sitting—and indeed more pressure to stay in your chair and do the next turn rather than getting up for a break. There is a lot of research now on the health impacts of doing a lot of sitting, and so if this trial were to dictate the form our work will take in the future then we would need to give careful consideration to how we prompt editors to take a break from sitting at regular intervals.

All the best

[name withheld]

FEEDBACK – CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 – 27, 2013

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial, that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

I had many concerns including:

1. not being able to make sense of responses to interjections
2. not knowing who interjected, what they said, what party they were from
3. time would be wasted checking parview, presiding officers roster and votes to find out who was speaking
4. logging in question time for 30 minutes would be stressful
5. quality of transcript would not be as good
6. 'logging' from TV would be a waste of time
7. editors would feel a lack of responsibility and ownership of the work

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

Yes, all of them.

Could never tell who interjected, what party they were from and could never hear an entire interjection on the sound, so just had to put *honourable member/s interjecting*—

Found it difficult to edit debate around interjections.

Wasted time checking presiding officers roster only to discover it was meant to be a woman in the chair when it was clearly a man, so then had to check Parview to confirm the occupant.

Got left in chamber logging question time for 40 minutes as they went over time. Found it extremely stressful as I could not type fast enough as I had to put all interjections and information out in full as it was for someone else to read (not just me). I usually abbreviate speakers names etc to make it quicker when typing interjections.

quality of transcript must not have been as good as often I had to just put in things like 'the minister at the table would know' or 'you would know' when in the past we would have identified who the minister at the table or the 'you' was so the reader would know who it was they were referring to.

Quality of the transcripts would have been affected too as subbing was stopped on some transcripts because we were so far behind because there were not enough people.

Also, on the days I subedited I noticed the quality of the transcript was not as high as usual. I feel this may have something to do with editors' lack of engagement with the work as they are relying on someone else to log it for them and not being present in the chamber. I too found it rather boring just being chained to my desk all day.

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it?

I worked mainly on the House of Representatives so there was no log except in question time. For one of my question time turns the logger did not show so had to do the turn blind. It was tedious to have to check the votes, presiding officers roster and parview to obtain all the information you need for your turn.

I also worked on the late night Senate transcripts which also had no log. I basically had to watch Parview and check multiple turns before mine to work out what was going on.

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted timeframe? If not, why not?

Some turns were late as I was waiting for notes. I needed some notes for a valedictory speech to check numerous names. I waited until they should have been picked up, went and checked the box and there were none. I then rang the member's office only to find there was no-one there. If I had been in the chamber at the time of the speech I would have seen the notes were not handed over and would have rung their office straight away and maybe they would have still been there.

Also when I was working on the FC no-one was collecting the notes on the day HSU were supposed to be collecting them. After the FC had got up for the day there were still notes locked in the antichamber and an editor needed to get the key to retrieve them. This wasted a lot of time.

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

Could never tell who interjected, what party they were from and could never hear an entire interjection on the sound, so just had to put *honourable member/s interjecting*—
Wasted time checking presiding officers roster only to discover it was meant to be a woman in the chair when it was clearly a man, so then had to check Parview to confirm the occupant. Suggest if this is to be way we are to work in the future just using 'Presiding officer' as a sidename and not bothering to identify who is in the chair.

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

Some turns were late because I was chasing notes. But one benefit was that when I had the usual HPS problems I was less stressed because I did not have to leave the turn unfinished and then rush to the chamber.

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

Yes, but it was no help whatsoever with interjections.

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience – if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

I made myself take a break after every turn as I fear getting injured and also to relieve the boredom of sitting at my desk all day.

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

If this is to be the way we work in future, I suggest assigning loggers for an hour and a half to cover question time so people are not left in the chamber for more than half an hour. You could assign the first logger again or another editor.

I am still unclear how the trial in any way make efficiencies. As far as I could tell, we were behind most of the time, we had extra casuals in to help out on the FC, we had two people doing the job of one on the Senate (one logging and one doing the turn), time was wasted having someone walk to the chambers to collect notes and subediting was not done on some days because we were behind.

FEEDBACK – CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 – 27, 2013

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial, that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

That if we are not in the chamber, we simply cannot fully report what went on.

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

Yes, though we are only part way through at this point. I received a Greens correction where the member noted the name of the member who interjected, but the editor had rendered them as 'a government member'. I had subbed that turn and knew that the interjection could be heard and that neither the editor nor I could guess who the interjector was. I did not accept the Greens correction to name the member who interjected. How are we to know that that was in fact the interjector? This creates a conflict of interest. A member may genuinely want to correct the record or they may be wanting to be mischievous. How are we to know? Another case: The Speaker warned a member who was subsequently ordered to leave the chamber. Where do you put the italics line/s to indicate that the member had been interjecting? It is arbitrary and incorrect to put it in randomly, and a fabrication. Concerns about fatigue and inefficiency of the notes collection process were also realised.

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it?

No. I found that the Senate log was done rather lazily and was insufficient. In particular, I had a senator who interjected and I could clearly hear the interjection and identify the voice on the audio. Also, the Acting Deputy President named the interjector and told them they were being disorderly. The log did not indicate any interjections and when the ADP spoke to the interjector, the logger put on the log 'ADP spoke to someone'!

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted time frame? If not, why not?

Yes, except in the cases of 90-second speeches and adjournment speeches, where the notes are critical. Notes are not available soon enough for this work. Also, when the chambers adjourn suddenly, we were not able to get speech notes before the chambers were locked by the attendants. It will not work if we have to rely on people other than Hansard officers to get the notes. I understand HSU experienced considerable delays in publishing when they found they did not have the documents with the material for incorporation.

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

Yes, see above. If we do not go to the chambers, we will lose the ability to pick who is speaking. After a time on the job, we learn the voices and are able to identify them on the audio recording. This is a skill that editors have always been required to have. Also, when people speak during divisions, we don't necessarily know who they are, especially if the log is insufficient.

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

No, because I relied on the vote officer's minutes. However, audio and visual recordings do not replace being in the chamber where you get an understanding of the proceedings. Senate log was inadequate.

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

Did not use it as it is too time consuming and inefficient. ParView is not a good tool for Hansard given our deadlines.

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience – if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

Found work this week very, very fatiguing. I found I was tied to my screen much, much more. Got a headache Monday night from too much screen work.

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

We have not been given a rationale for the trial, so how can it be evaluated other than through this feedback? The integrity of the Hansard is being diminished yet again because we are not reporting fully what happened in the chamber.

FEEDBACK – CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 – 27, 2013

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial, that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

My concerns before the trial were that away from the chambers I and other editors would be unable to transcribe and edit proceedings as efficiently and effectively as when present and that there are WHS implications in the changes being trialled. Moreover, the efficiencies signalled by the departmental secretary are not apparent in the trial as set up but would inevitably flow from editors having to take on extra transcription and editing in the next parliament.

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

I worked on the House of Representatives, not the Senate, so I cannot comment directly on the effect of the more fluid and complex Senate procedures, and the inadequacies of the Dynamic Red, on editors' work. What I can say from experience, though, is that at certain times of the day, including Discovery of Formal Business and the Committee stage of bills, it would be more difficult to do the job effectively from editors' desks and that having someone logging from ParView would be unlikely to compensate.

As for the House of Representatives, I had a major difficulty when trying to report a motion to suspend standing and sessional orders. From the Hansard table I would have been aware of all the players and what they said when they did not have the call and thus their microphones were not on. These inaudible contributions tended to be responded to by the chair and/or other players and at times an italic line was very inadequate in the circumstances.

On interjections generally, only rarely can they be picked up on the audio or video. They are often responded to and add flavour and even meaning to the transcript (which is, after all, a record of what happened, not a set of minutes like the *Journals* and the *Votes*). That said, persistent interjection is usually discouraged by the chair as being disruptive or disorderly. One result of members and senators taking on board the absence of Hansard from the chambers is that some started repeating interjections and responding to them, or even adding the interjections to their pinks and greens (P&G) corrections. The issue is that they may have misheard an interjection or may not remember it clearly by the time they get their pinks and greens. This poses a dilemma for Hansard both in verifying the record and in being able to accept P&G corrections adding interjections.

One thing that had a decidedly negative impact on efficiency and effectiveness was the inability to access speakers' notes in a timely way. A significant number of speakers read their speeches (or in the Senate refer to copious notes) and it greatly assists in the timely sending of pinks and greens to parliamentarians if we can get these as soon as possible after they are available and scan them with our optical character recognition software. During the trial there was half-hourly collection of notes by one person from the three chambers, leading to a lag of up to an hour in their availability to editors. Also, with editors not there to ask for notes, the busy attendants were less likely to ask for them and the inefficiency was compounded. On many occasions during the trial I gained access to notes too late to use them in the transcription process and a couple of times had to send my 7½-minute could not check names.

[In an ideal world, more notes would be delivered to Hansard electronically. For the foreseeable future, having prompt access to the printed notes after speeches are delivered is very helpful indeed.]

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it?

The House of Representatives question time log was of some use. There were, however, some extra things I would have noted had I been in the chamber myself.

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted timeframe? If not, why not?

Paradoxically, for the preponderance of my 7½-minute turns I did not find that I was able to complete the turns any quicker. Notes were not readily available, and I have already mentioned the negative effect that had on efficiency and effectiveness. Names and quotes generally took more time to find and check. There tended to be uncertainty in my mind about the atmosphere in the chamber, which meant that I had to be circumspect about elements of reporting or else make assumptions that I did not feel I should have to make. For someone who has for 20 years been able to benefit from experiencing first-hand the parts of the proceedings I was transcribing and editing, this was a disappointment.

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

I refer you to my answer to Q2. Most voices are familiar to me but for inexperienced editors not being present would have imposed extra difficulty.

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

Broadly speaking, the time I took was about the same. The time 'saved' by not going to the chamber was then lost in having less certainty over what had happened and needing to spend extra time making sure of matters relating to the chamber and the speech(es) given. And, as I stressed in my answer to Q4, not having timely access to notes was a major handicap to efficiency and effectiveness. On occasion having the notes would have allowed me to send pinks and greens to members much more quickly than I was in fact able to do.

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

ParView is up to 10 minutes behind real time and this puts a constraint on its usefulness. A little more information can be gained from it than the audio but it is focused on the person with the call and it is not an acceptable substitute for chamber attendance.

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience – if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

My experience of the limited trial period, two weeks, was that there were negative WHS impacts from not going to the chambers. Editors work long days under constant pressure and there is often a temptation to miss screen breaks to keep up. It is worth noting that a troubling proportion of editor injuries over time have been as a result of long hours in front of the screen in estimates weeks, when there are no built-in breaks from the computer. A concerning number of editors speak of niggling pain in arms and/or shoulders after estimates. And these are four weeks in the parliamentary calendar; adding another score or so would potentially have severe consequences.

Going to the chambers provides an enforced break and gives physical and mental refreshment to people whose working days in sitting weeks can be very stressful. It would be a backward step in WHS if the trial were to usher in a permanent change to working conditions.

The DPS secretary told estimates that this was an efficiency measure and that it would mean shorter days for editors. The latter comment is no doubt a result of her lack of knowledge of how Hansard operates and probably of the hours actually worked by the three chambers, particularly the Federation Chamber. Be that as it may, the logical follow-up to this efficiency measure is to have editors complete more turns in the same time span, compounding the pressure and giving even less time for individually engineered screen breaks. This has the potential to cause, over time, a steep rise in injuries for people whose incidence of workplace injury is already high.

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

I will summarise my experience of the chamber trial as follows:

1. I felt frustrated by not being able to fulfil my role as well as I would have liked.
2. The delay in getting access to speakers' notes was notably detrimental to the efficiency and effectiveness of my work in being able to promptly deliver pinks and greens to members and senators .
3. Interjections should be part of the record of proceedings but cannot be furnished under the trial arrangements.
4. Last but by no means least, the trialled process presents a real WHS risk to editors working long, pressured hours.

FEEDBACK – CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 – 27, 2013

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial, that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

Yes, I had considerable concerns. Principally, I felt the quality of our product would be compromised by *Hansard* not being present in both chambers. Compromises would be inevitable, both in accuracy and in detail. It simply would not be possible to record relevant interjections, either by name or in full, nor would it be possible to have an awareness of atmospherics in the chamber so as to be alert to likely interjectors or indeed to other speakers.

Another concern was loss of the knowledge that comes from experience. Our clients—members and senators—are likely to overlook *Hansard's* need for their notes and prompt delivery of assistance if they didn't see us on the job with them. New MPs and new *Hansard* editors are less likely to remember each other. The identity and voice of individual members and senators would become more of a mystery to an editor who did not actively see each speaker.

At the outset there appeared to be no aspect of the trial that would enhance *Hansard's* reputation. Instead, it seemed harmful aspects would outweigh any benefits.

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

The above concerns were realised, although mitigated slightly. Not having to dash to the chamber meant I had extra minutes to finish a difficult turn. However, this is such a rarity that the benefit was exceptional rather than being of any encouragement.

I am convinced that if the trial becomes permanent then *Hansard* is on a slippery slope to mediocrity. Our tradition and our values are in question. A senator and a ministerial staffer have commented to me that they miss seeing us in the chamber.

Members' and senators' speech notes were available when I needed them. I was uncomfortable, though, knowing that I depended on an unseen and unknown person to deliver them from the chambers when previously this responsibility was with a known editor returning directly to their desk.

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it?

I found I used the log less frequently than before. It was a case of having no personal input to it. Personally monitoring ParlView became more important, along with greater use of the Live Minutes/Dynamic Red and Votes Officers details.

The central log should always be available but I fear it will not always be relied on.

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted timeframe? If not, why not?

Yes, the time allowed is adequate. I would not recommend reducing that time because flexibility is essential for a complex transcript and also to provide breathing space when faced with six or possibly seven turns a day.

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

Many barriers existed. Apart from monitoring question time, there was no-one to record comments off-camera or off-mike. A response to an interjection in some cases was relevant to the debate—if the interjection was heard. Otherwise the reply, as recorded, makes no

sense to the reader and may embarrass the person who responded. A problem in future is that there will be fewer experienced editors to assist in identifying a voice in isolation. Separately to interjections, there was a difficulty with the Senate in knowing the identity of an acting chair of the Committee of the Whole when reporting back to an Acting Deputy President during the passage of a bill.

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

No.

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

I used ParView but I am not familiar with optional camera views, which might make the job easier. The internal television broadcast is more useful as it identifies speakers and has a time clock.

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience – if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

Walking to the chamber is very important. It allows an editor to stretch out, switch to long vision and mingle with people. The absence of an opportunity to walk is detrimental to WH&S. I regard it as essential to refresh the mind and body.

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

The trial has shown that the Australian parliament got it right when it agreed to allow *Hansard* access to the chamber floor to report proceedings. To justify the removal of *Hansard* on financial grounds alone does not improve efficiency or the quality of output. Any other justification is not apparent and has not been explained or understood. I am not in favour of the trial becoming a permanent fixture.

FEEDBACK – CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 – 27, 2013

Please note: I am only able to make comments about the second week of the trial

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial, that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

Yes. Our inability to identify interjections and interjectors, where those would usually be reported according to our policy, means that a certain amount of meaning and the 'flavour' of the exchange and/or that part of the debate will be lost. I was also concerned about other inaudible exchanges that might be important, which we would normally have at least some sense of in the chamber—for example, people discussing procedure off mic, which might clarify how something should be rendered, particularly in the Senate, which is often procedurally complicated.

If someone starts to speak before their microphone is turned on, there would be similar problems, unless you can lip-read. (To be fair, sometimes this happens when you are in the chamber and don't realise that the microphone is not on, so you still may not get the words.) If someone's mic is turned off and then it is not turned back on when, for example, there is a further exchange (which I have seen happen), we will obviously be more likely to have a problem if we don't have an editor in the chamber.

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

Yes. In only one such case was I able to identify an interjector and the interjection because the person was sitting in front of the speaker and thus just audible on the sound and I could just see the top of their head on ParView, which was distinctive enough to confirm who it was. It was also quite important, I thought, so I was glad to have been able to work it out.

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it?

It did not supply information about interjections and interjectors other than the time of interjections.

Otherwise, I found it useful to quickly ascertain where the debate was up to and which debate it was. I was working on the Senate, mostly, where there isn't any other clear time line to look at for this purpose. (The Dynamic Red is rarely clear, though it is useful for some purposes.)

In my view, it is crucial for doing our job well that editors clearly understand what is being discussed and understand the procedural context of their turns.

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted timeframe? If not, why not?

In the sense that a 'standard' transcript would formerly have included information about certain interjections, as per our policy, no. Otherwise, I did not find timeliness a problem.

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

See notes above. Interjectors were almost universally inaudible and invisible. In one turn I subbed, this meant that half of a series of exchanges with the Presiding Officer was not able to be transcribed and had to be rendered with anonymous italics lines. Here is the example:

... Kevin Rudd at a press conference—

An honourable senator interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order! You do need—

An honourable senator interjecting—

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Mr Rudd.

An honourable senator interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Yes, you did. Thank you.

Working out who was in the chair was challenging. The 'chamber' TV view is too blurry and too distant to confirm the occupant of the chair. It is only when a camera focuses on them that you can be sure that it is the person listed on the chair roster (when that is available)—or if you can recognise their voice when they speak.

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

No, but see comments above.

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

It helped me identify one interjector (see note above). I did not use ParView otherwise.

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience – if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

I was glad to be able to walk to collect notes after logging in the IC room because you have to sit sideways to watch the screen—not an ideal arrangement from a WHS perspective. I certainly miss the walking, which I think gives a good screen break. This comment is only about the walking itself.

More broadly, I certainly feel that I have a more acute sense of what is going on in the chamber when I am physically present, and there have been times when this has helped me to sort out difficult sound later, in the transcription and editing stage. I find the job most satisfying when I feel that I have done the best possible job. If we are no longer in the chamber, we will have less information with which to work and therefore potentially a lower level of job satisfaction and higher levels of frustration, much as we have experienced with the poorer quality of sound for away committees in particular since the changes in technology and practice that occurred there. (However, I do appreciate that the latter changes were necessary for budgetary and other reasons.)

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

Being in the chamber makes you more confident that you have the correct sense of the proceedings you are transcribing and their context.

On the other hand, not having to meet a highly specific, narrow deadline in the chamber means that you may have more time to either complete a difficult turn in slightly more time—previously you would have had to hold it over till after you came back from the next one, possibly running late for another one or two as a result—or pick up another unrostered turn to transcribe or sub without worrying too much about whether it's going to run into the time of your next rostered turn.

However, I am concerned that if we lose our visibility our work will be less understood by our clients—perhaps they will not even realise that the transcription requires human intervention, as one member's comment in the chamber during the trial suggested—and by our senior management and perhaps valued less. This would not be good for morale.

The Secretary has spoken a number of times in recent months about the need to publicise the work of our department to our clients and the public more broadly. Removing Hansard editors from the chambers seems to me to be a retrograde step for public and client recognition of the work of Hansard.

FEEDBACK – CHAMBER TRIAL: JUNE 17 – 27, 2013

1. Did you have any concerns prior to commencement of the trial, that the removal of Hansard would have a negative impact on the final transcription? If so, what were the concerns?

I had an open mind. I was more disappointed that a historical element of the way this building and our parliament operates was changing.

Being determined professionals committed to high standards, I knew that Hansard editors would work hard to find ways to produce a quality end result, no matter what constraints they faced. During the trial, I watched as my colleagues discussed the various scenarios and situations they faced until they found workable solutions to any problems encountered. Even though many editors were not happy with the trial they were all determined that our clients would still receive a product whose quality was in no way diminished.

Prior to the trial I had some concerns about how the log would be constructed and accessed. I also could foresee that availability of notes could present some problems.

2. At the completion of the trial, were those concerns realised?

Yes.

The availability of notes and the maintenance of the log are two critical issues that need to be assessed and addressed if the trial is to proceed to implementation.

The other critical, and unforeseen, issue that arose for me and needs to be addressed for everyone is the WH&S issue of ensuring people take breaks away from their desks.

3. Was the central log able to provide the information you required at the time you required it?

Not always, especially early in a turn. It depended a lot on how often the logger was saving the file – and if it was a busy turn, then I suppose saving was the last thing on the logger's mind.

It would be good if the logger included who was in the chair more often.

When it is my turn in the chamber I save to the log what I think I need for my turn. A different logger may include things that are of no assistance to me while omitting things that I would consider vital. I certainly had situations in the trial where information that I would have expected to be on the log (interjections, acronyms, unusual names/locations) was not there for me to use and I had to go searching for it.

Some guidelines need to be developed around how the log is to be completed and maintained. **THIS ASPECT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED IF WE ARE PROCEEDING TO IMPLEMENTATION.**

4. Were you able to readily produce the standard transcript within the accepted timeframe? If not, why not?

In most instances I was able to get my turn out in time.

I was able to manage my time better during the trial because I was not bound by having to be in the chamber at a specific time.

I saved time because I did not have to walk back and forth to the chamber.

I lost time having to call up the vision when I needed to identify a speaker or interjector.

I found I was going back to source documents or asking colleagues or referring to vision for information a lot more than previously – all of which takes time out of a turn.

I lost a lot of time because speech notes were not readily available when required. **THIS ASPECT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED IF WE ARE PROCEEDING TO IMPLEMENTATION.**

5. Were there any barriers to identifying speakers or interjections? If so, what were they?

When you are in the chamber you have a strong idea of who is getting ready to speak or interject, just from body language. This sense is very useful, especially when the chamber is crowded or noisy. You can then keep an eye on such a person to catch what they say for the log, so that their contribution can be attributed to them. This capacity is lost when we are removed from chambers.

I often could not pick up what an interjector said, just from the sound, and usually could not tell who it was. The vision does not pick up an interjector, except by pure serendipitous chance.

Sometimes it was difficult to know who was in the chair if the chamber did not stick to their schedule and the logger did not regularly record who had the chair.

6. With greater reliance on audio and/or visual recordings, did you experience any difficulties in getting your transcript produced on time?

Please refer to above answers.

I did not rely on visual recordings at all – in their current form they were of no additional assistance to me.

I still required the full 90 minutes, on average, to produce my edited transcripts, so there were no efficiency gains as far as my transcribing and editing was concerned – I was just doing it slightly differently.

7. Were you able to access ParView without disruption and did it provide the information you were seeking? Any comments regarding the use of ParView.

I was able to access ParView when required. However, it only gives one view (the person who has the call). I did not rely on it for interjections because it was obvious that it did not pick up either the interjector or what they said.

For me, ParView was the least useful tool at my disposal.

8. From a WH&S perspective, how did the absence of walking to the chamber affect your overall work day experience – if at all? Please identify any specific areas of concern.

I like to be able to leave my desk at regular intervals to give my eyes something else to focus on, stretch my legs, and just get out of the Hansard environment for a little while. From that point of view, going to and from the chambers has a lot of positive WH&S benefits, and I miss them.

Regarding the trial, WH&S positives include:

- Reduced stress to be in chamber at a precise time – particularly for a first turn of the day when it can be difficult to find somewhere to park the car on a busy day!
- Increased flexibility in structuring my day led to a greater feeling of control over minor decision making that affects how I do my work. This is psychologically beneficial.

WH&S negatives of the absence of walking to the chamber included:

- Lack of regular breaks away from my desk led to some headaches and neck pain by the second week.
- Lack of regular breaks away from my screen led to very tired, mucousy eyes and probably contributed to the headaches.
- Time is always tight to submit turns, so I found I was starting my new turn as soon as I finished my previous turn, without taking 'time out' to stretch my legs, relax my

vision, and de-stress for a couple of minutes. This is not good for my circulation, in particular (and visions of DVT danced through my head), but with the pressure on I just kept thinking 'I'll take a break after my next turn – or the one after that.'

9. Further comments on your impression of the chamber trial.

I do not feel that there were any measurable efficiency gains for me (for example, submitting turns in a shorter time) because there were as many things that hampered efficiency as increased it.

I am happy not to be in the chambers as I feel I can manage my time better that way (for example, I can devote a few extra minutes to a particularly tricky turn).

The biggest contributor to any efficiency gain would be to have the speech notes available when the transcriber requires them, that is, as the speaker is giving the speech (remember, there is now no delay and we are picking up the turn within seconds of the sound becoming available), or as soon as the speech is over. Some form of electronic availability would be ideal. The current system is not meeting transcribers' requirements, with notes usually not available until after a turn has been transcribed.

I have a final observation on the value of the transcriber having observed their 7.5 minutes in the chamber. I had occasion to view the member for Lynes' wonderful valedictory speech on Thursday 27 June and thought I would like to keep a copy of the Hansard transcription in my personal records. When I read through the transcript I noticed there were some subtle yet significant inconsistencies between the live speech and the transcript – things that were obviously missed through having the sound alone as reference. I'll give just a couple of examples from the speech:

- Inclusion of an interjection from Ms Gillard:

Ms Gillard interjecting—

Mr OAKESHOTT: Thank you, Julia.

Rather than an interjection, this is, in fact, acknowledgement by Mr Oakeshott that Ms Gillard has come to sit in an adjacent seat. You cannot tell this from the sound alone, and without being in the chamber when his words were said, the transcriber would not understand Mr Oakeshott's referral to Ms Gillard and presume she had made an off-mike interjection.

- Towards the conclusion of the speech, the *Hansard* transcription reads:

Some of the things that have been said in the last three years have been **discussed**. They cannot be accepted, whatever happens from hereon.

What Mr Oakeshott actually said was:

Some of the things that have been said in the last three years have been **disgusting**. They cannot be accepted, whatever happens from hereon.

This puts a very different light on the message he was trying to convey. Given Mr Oakeshott's visible emotion at that point, it is something the Hansard transcriber would probably have remembered had they been in the chamber when it was said and clearly heard.

There are a number of other examples just from a cursory read through of this one speech, but these two are the most glaring. I doubt either would have occurred had the transcribing editor been in the chamber for their 7.5 minute turn.

Trial Feedback

A series of general points, not in any particular order and dealing with trial issues at a few different levels.

- In the spirit of objectivity, I have to acknowledge that I did notice the extra few minutes to get turns done—in most cases—and it was welcome.
- I do not think this extra time would necessarily be measurable using statistics from the system. Using the "time job was open" to assess whether there are time savings should not work. Good editors, if they 'finish' early, do not close up their job; they use the extra time to go over the turn another one, two or three times – you always pick things up. Alternatively, with the extra time, a good editor will spend more time thinking about how best to deal with turn problems (clumsy sentences, etc) as they work through the turn. Editing is usually an open-ended task.

Where I had extra time, therefore, I hope that the benefit is reflected more in better turns than in the system recording that I had closed the turn up earlier.

- I think it would be dangerous to assess the operational impact of the not having Hansard editors in the chamber over such a short (two-week) time frame. The implications are, I think, more long term. I think there is a lack of understanding of how much value editors get – over time rather than for the specific turn they are doing – from observing the chamber. It is the way you learn how the chamber works, about various obscure procedures and how matters are dealt with.

Experienced editors will have seen most things before and will know how even unusual occurrences should be dealt with in the transcript. So, for the time being, the Hansard team will cope – because there is a critical mass of editors with experience of what goes on in the chamber.

Any problems will arise in a few years time when Hansard may be comprised nearly entirely of editors who have never been in the chamber.

- The following comments are a bit 'outside the trial' but I think the impact of some of the changes we have seen over the last couple of years will have a cumulative impact over time, even if they are being coped with now:

- Disbanding the style management process: experienced editors can cope without a style guide or style notes because they have had many years dealing with the old guide. That guide was not just a reference manual but a training and learning tool – it was how editors learned to recognise that there was a style issue to deal with. And keeping the style guide up to date (or identifying gaps or inconsistencies) engendered discussion and general awareness raising of style issues.

- Dismantling the L&D process: Hansard is coping with the lack of dedicated training for new editors – but only because there is a large core of experienced editors who are picking up the problems at the subbing, pinks-and-greens or proof-checking stages.

- Reduced logging: Again, experienced editors cope with poor logs – they know how to fill in the gaps, so to speak. But, again, I think the learning aspect of logging—seeing how committees work and learning to identify the things that will be a problem for editors at their desk—have been underestimated.

- Similar comments apply to our 'cut-down' approaches to form and recruitment – I think the problems are more likely to arise in the long run. They do not necessarily have an immediate operational impact.

NB – if one expects the Hansard process to change radically over the next few years (eg some sort of improved technological solution)

- Note collection (and advising editors that notes had not been collected) did not work well during the first week. It was better during the second week but is still often not timely enough. Really, once you are half an hour into a turn, it is too late for the notes to offer a major efficiency gain (if you are going to scan a speech, you want to scan it before you have typed or voiced half of it!). Still useful for checking names, etc, but there would be some lost efficiency from not having the editor picking up notes immediately on their way out of the chamber.

- It did not affect me (I did not have to chase anything from a member's office during the fortnight) but I am aware that a few editors, when chasing names, etc, from members, copped a bit of irritation from members/senators who had handed over notes and therefore could not understand why the editor was chasing them. This was usually because of some breakdown in the system of letting the editor know the notes were available – a couple of times the notes just seemed to disappear. This notification process worked better during the second week with better use of the Sharepoint notes areas.
- Parlview – I experienced a bit of 'freezing', which was frustrating when I was in a hurry to find a particular bit to replay. Parlview was not very useful for interjections where I needed to identify someone or for when I wanted to identify the chair (this was not always as per the 'Document View' rosters – sometimes even when the chair spoke the camera did not move to them. But it was a useful extra tool on a couple of occasions.
- Interesting sidelight: Senator Bernardi, as Temporary Chair, after Conroy (partly off mike) has said "I will just find out for you" and gone off to talk to his advisers (leaving a silence on DART), says, "For the benefit of Hansard, the minister is consulting with his advisers to get the information".
- In a similar case of "members helping us", one member wrote on his pink/green "This was Graham Perrett" next to where we had put "an honourable member interjecting".
- I had one interesting incident of a "because I was not in the chamber variety" Senator Polley, clearly in response to an interjection (not logged and not audible either on DART or Parlview), says, "It is all right for Senator Cormann". However, as she proceeds, it becomes clear that it is likely that she has misspoken/misnamed the interjector because she starts talking about how he (the interjector) is known to be the leading proponent of the Tea Party in Oz and is well known for it through his blogs. This sounds like Bernardi. A bit later, the temporary chair tells Bernardi to be quiet – which also seems to suggest the interjector was Bernardi rather than Cormann. Bernardi is also the next speaker in the debate, so he was there (while I suspect Cormann was not even in the chamber). I spoke to my subber [name withheld] about this and he thought we did not (not having been in the chamber and there not being enough information from Parlview) have enough information to 'correct' Polley and that we should leave the reference to Cormann in the transcript. However, while I would normally have omitted Bernardi being told to be quiet (it was just "Order, Senator Bernardi!"), I left it in as a sort of signal that he was there and interjecting (at least later).
- I had a slightly similar incident where the senator speaking referred to the ADP as sharing an interest in the matter and 'having been a member of the committee which inquired into it'. However, the person listed on the Document View roster as being the ADP at that time was not a member of the relevant committee. The chair rostered for the previous half hour, however, was a member of that committee. I could have skipped over it, but that ADP spoke a couple of times during the turn and needed to be identified. Sadly, the Parlview camera did not go to the chair when he spoke. I did not know the voices of the two 'candidate' ADPs well enough to recognise which one it was (the two were, from memory, Marshall and Edwards). In the end, I took a minor punt and went with the ADP who was a member of the relevant committee
- There was one day where I, and the editors around me on the roster, were having to deal with what is generally a tricky bit of the Senate process to deal with anyway – a bunch of tabled documents and reports. We had to do a lot of consulting with each other to work out what had gone on and whether various motions had been moved and, if so, when. The log was not much help. This was the main occasion over the two weeks where I thought it would have been useful to have been in the chamber.
- These few instances aside, however, mostly there were no immediate operational issues from not being in the chamber.
- It bothers me when there is discussion of assessing the trial (or Hansard generally) on the basis of "accuracy". I am not sure what is meant by that. A completely "accurate" transcript would be unreadable and would include reams of extraneous rubbish. Accuracy is an element of what we do, but it is not the main thing that should be being looked at in

assessing the quality of our work. A few phrases used by senators/members which better describe what we do include:

... the dark art of turning our gobbledygook into statesman-like addresses

... creating elegance from inelegance

... rendering sensible that which, occasionally, is less than that.

• Hopefully this last thought will not get me into any trouble! I have a background in business process re-engineering (BPR – just as an aside, I think any modern manager should have a look at a book by Hammer and Champy, 1993, called "Re-engineering the Corporation") which means (I hope) that I have some knowledge of how to go about seeking efficiency gains. I have generally not 'bought in' to (publicly!) second-guessing management about the various changes that have been brought in over the last few years. I accept that our managers have a tough job and have clearly been facing huge budgetary pressures—probably among a range of other pressures of which I am not even aware. I doubt they need some washed-up former manager, now 'just an editor' on their case all the time (and I don't want any part of what I recognise to be their tough jobs!) So I am hesitant even now to be too critical.

But on this one occasion I will make two very broad observations about the changes we have seen over the last few years, of which this recent trial is but the latest.

1. I am used to seeing changes being driven out of a problem analysis – something that says, "A. This is/are the problem/s we are trying to solve. B. This is what we think is causing the problem/s. C. Here are the options for addressing that/those problem/s. D. Here is how we think each of those options will solve the problem/s. E. Here are the pros and cons of the proposed approach. F. This is the one we have chosen and why. G. Here is how we are going to test whether that option works or not. H. Here is how we are going to measure (a) whether the approach has solved the problem and (b) any other effects of the change." This may well have been going on 'behind the scenes' and there may well be some reason why we have not seen any of it. But, from the editor end, it has looked much more like "We are going to do this" – without a lot of clear rationale behind it. Some of it appears to have been driven by the need for cost efficiencies, which I accept. But the risk of making those sorts of changes without a problem analysis is that cost savings may turn out to be 'penny wise, pound foolish'.

In this respect, I think it is a good thing that there is going to be a detailed review of Hansard. Hopefully it will provide a solid analytical basis for where we go from here.

It strikes me as odd, however, that we are trialling such an apparently random, one-off change as taking us out of the chamber before that review, rather than waiting for the review to tell us what we should be doing.

2. Hammer and Champy emphasise the value of talking to workers at the coalface when looking for efficiency gains – involving them in the problem analysis (at states B, C, D and E in particular). Quite apart from the morale benefits of involving people and getting more team 'ownership' of such changes, it is usually the case that the workers are better placed – through better understanding of the process – to identify where improvements can be made. (I vaguely recall a particularly striking example – might have been in the Hammer and Champy book – based on a massive efficiency gain in a major hotel chain which came out of the CEO talking to the maids!)

Several of the changes that have been made have seemed to appear a bit out of the blue (noting that as a sessional I probably miss a lot of stuff) and have taken editors by surprise. I would have thought there might be value in maybe putting a team of interested editors together and tasking them with looking for efficiency gains – might be easier to sell the outcomes amongst other things. But perhaps this is being overtaken by the Hansard review process.

[name withheld]

27 June 2013

From: [name withheld] (DPS)
Sent: Tuesday, 2 July 2013 10:46 AM
To: [name withheld] (DPS)
Subject: Specific References - Trial notes

You are just soooooo lucky I was not completely swamped this morning. As it is, I managed to fit in some time to find the specific examples I mentioned to you yesterday. I just hope I manage to get my timesheet done with the 7 hours left to me.

17 June – turn 39

This was the turn where TC Bernardi, during a committee stage debate during which Conroy had wandered off to talk to his advisors (so there was just silence on the audio), decided to announce to the world that "For the benefit of Hansard, Senator Conroy has gone over to seek some advice on the question asked by Senator Waters" or some such. This was the first day of the trial, so I just assumed that Bernardi had been briefed about us not being in the chamber and was trying to be helpful!

I did not put his comment in the transcript (didn't seem to add much).

17 June – turn 63

This was the turn where Senator Polley called Senator Bernardi "Senator Cormann". As I said, I was 99% sure she meant Bernardi, but my evil subber [name withheld] told me I would be distorting the trial to give priority to inference over direct evidence.

17 June – turns around 74.

I think – not entirely sure – that these were the ones I was talking about.

Turn 74 was not too bad for me, although there was a bit of faffing around with the editors around me trying to work out if and when there had been an "ordered that it be made a parliamentary paper" motion (at one stage this was in two different turns) or a "be printed" motion or if and when anyone had actually moved the "take note". But I was conscious from a lot of cursing and interchange in my office (and [name withheld] coming in to see [name withheld] about his turn) that the editors around me [names withheld] from memory) were struggling to work out what was going on – I think [name withheld] ended up taking about 2 hours for her turn. I think ([name withheld] is not so sure) that being in the chamber would have made it easier to work out what was going on in these turns.

20 June – turn 13 – this is the one where whoever was speaking addressed the ADP –which, according to the roster, should have been Edwards. However, whoever was speaking referred to the ADP as having been on a particular committee with him – and Edwards was not on that committee. Nothing in Pariview helped. In the end, I punted Marshall (who was on that committee and had been rostered before Edwards).

Logging – 27 June – Macdonald giving a speech at 16:04. During the speech he responds to an interjection – a woman's voice – and looks off in the direction of the ADP (ie "front" of the chamber). On the alternative viewing channel I could see that the coalition duty people were all blokes, that Stephens was in the chair and that on the government side Farrell was on duty with some woman sitting behind him. The picture, however, was too crap to identify her. With help, I ended up guessing on the log (and made it clear it was a guess) that it was Thorp and guessed that it was her who had interjected. The editor put the interjection in as Thorp. Hopefully this was right.

[name withheld]