

Appendix 3

Trends in bills referral to Senate committees

Trends in percentage of bills referred to Senate committees

Year	No. of Bills introduced into Parliament	Individual Bills referred	%age of individual Bills referred	Package of Bills referred	%age of package of Bills referred
2002	271*	62	23%	45	17%
2003	266^	68	26%	53	20%
2005	208^	64	31%	49	24%
2006	219#	102	47%	71	32%

*Does include Bills readopted from previous Parliament (5)

Does not include (a) Appropriation Bills; Bills restored to Notice Paper at 2nd reading but not referred; 2 draft Bills

^ Does not include (a) Appropriation Bills; Bills restored to Notice Paper at 2nd reading but not referred

Does include Bill withdrawn (1)

Does not include (a) Appropriation Bills; Bills restored to Notice Paper at 2nd reading but not referred

SENATE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2006-07 – HEARING 12 FEBRUARY 2007
DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

P3: HANSARD, P.10 - SENATOR MURRAY

Comparative figures on time between presentation of legislation reports and consideration of legislation.

Average time between Senate committees reporting on bills
and bills being debated

August 2001 to December 2002

Average number of sitting days before debate: 14.74

Average number of working days before debate: 46.21

Note: due to 2001 election several bills referred to committees subsequently lapsed and are not included in these figures

August 2005 to December 2006

Average number of sitting days before debate: 6.51

Average number of working days before debate: 22.21

Note: as at 28 February 2007, the 05-06 figures do not include several bills still to be debated by the Senate, however 2 bills listed for debate on 27/2/07 have been included

SENATE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2006-07 – HEARING 12 FEBRUARY 2007****DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE****ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE****P4: HANSARD, P.12 - SENATOR MURRAY****Statement of reasonable minimum time for a committee inquiry on a bill**

Answer: The following time line is regarded as a reasonable minimum for each stage of a bill inquiry given a reporting time of 27 days (the average time for a bill inquiry in 2005-06). On this time line 8 days - 3 and 4, 10 and 11, 17 and 18, 24 and 25 - are weekends and are not working days for those outside the parliamentary environment.

Day 1 - Initial committee meeting to make decisions on conduct of inquiry, set date for hearings and deadline for submissions (secretariat to develop list of potential witnesses, examine bill and associated documents including Bills Digest and Scrutiny of Bills Committee comment)

Day 2 – secretariat to organise advertisement of inquiry and letters seeking submissions

Day 3 – weekend

Day 4 – weekend

Day 5 – secretariat commences work on report – outline of bill and introductory material (basis for briefing paper for committee), contact potential witnesses, organise venues, travel and other administration for public hearings

Day 6 – as above, process early submissions

Day 7 – as above

Day 8 – as above

Day 9 – deadline for submissions, submissions arrive en masse

Day 10 – weekend

Day 11 – weekend

Day 12 – secretariat to process submissions and organise witnesses for public hearings, in consultation with Chair and committee

Day 13 – secretariat to prepare meeting papers for hearing

Day 14 – as above

Day 15 – public hearing

Day 16 – draft report while awaiting Hansard (while Hansard can be provided on 24 hour turnaround it is more reasonable to factor in the three day turnaround)

Day 17 – weekend, as above if necessary

Day 18 – as above

Day 19 – draft report while awaiting Hansard, organise meeting to consider report

Day 20 – finalise report – insert Hansard quotes

Day 21 – provide early draft to Chair

Day 22 – edit and proof read report awaiting Chair's input

Day 23 – discuss report with Chair, make amendments and provide to committee members for consideration meeting

Day 24 – weekend, secretariat to work on editing and proofreading draft

Day 25 – weekend as above

Day 26 – meeting to consider report, Secretariat to work late to make necessary amendments and process any additional comments, dissenting reports etc.

Day 27 – printing and tabling

These dates are indicative and flexible. Frequently, a committee may make a decision to give witnesses more time to prepare submissions and will hold the hearing at a later date. This will obviously affect the rest of the time line, as will the Chair's availability to consider the draft report and make comments to be incorporated by the secretariat. The secretariat's work will depend on factors such as the complexity of the inquiry, the number of submissions.

The time line may also alter if it is clear from the public hearing that there is no possibility of a unanimous report, when every effort will be made by the secretariat to shorten the time lines so that other committee members may have more time to prepare dissenting reports or additional comments.