

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Output 2.4

Question No. 3

Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 31 October 2006:

In 1984:

- (a) Were Ministers subject to the classification placed on documents or, were they at liberty to alter the classification?
- (b) Please provide the document handling procedures from the Protective Security Manual (from 1984).
- (c) Did the National Security Council of Cabinet exist?
- (d) If so, was the Treasurer a member of that Committee?

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

- (a) Yes, Ministers were subject to the classification placed on documents.

Document classifications could be altered through consultation with the officer who assigned the original classification or periodic re-assessment as authorised by the department head or the appropriate Minister.

- (b) Department heads were responsible for the implementation of PSM-compliant departmental security instructions to manage classified documents. Access to classified documents was limited to persons with a security clearance to the appropriate level and a genuine need to know.
- (c) The current form of the National Security Committee of Cabinet was established in early 1996. A similar Committee existed in 1984 and was called the National and International Security Committee.
- (d) The Treasurer was not a member of that Committee.