

HANSARD

Hansard is the written record of what members and senators say in Parliament. A recording is made of all speeches and used to create a printed and web document of everything that has been said including interjections by other members and senators.

The day after a parliamentary sitting or a committee hearing, Hansard publishes a 'proof' copy for checking. Members and senators can offer changes and correct factual mistakes. Some time later, the final version is printed in a volume of one week's debates. Hansard is also published on the Parliament House website.

Hansard is also a written record of parliamentary committee hearings, which are also official meetings of the Parliament. Committee Hansards include all statements made by non parliamentarians who are presenting statements and evidence to the committee.

The term 'Hansard' refers to the printing company that began the printing of the parliamentary debates in England in the late 19th century.

Many people use the Hansard record. Journalists can check on previous speeches by members and senators. Voters can read what their representatives are saying about local issues. Members and senators distribute copies of their speeches to those who are interested.

Hansard is not a legal record of the decisions and actions of the Parliament. The definitive record is called Votes and Proceedings in the House of Representatives and the Journals of the Senate. Nevertheless, Hansard is a reliable and detailed record of the oral work of members and senators.

Members and senators can ask permission of the House or the Senate for additional information such as government statements and public statements on various issues to be included in the Hansard record.

If a second reading speech on a bill has been given in the House of Representatives, it is not repeated in the Senate but merely printed in the Hansard record.

Until recently, speeches were recorded by Hansard reporters writing in shorthand and then typing up a full transcription. The Hansard reporters sit at a separate table in the middle of the House of Representatives or the Senate. Hansard now uses digital recording equipment and the Hansard reporters also record details that the recordings might not pick up.



Photo by AUSPIC

Hansard reporters in the House of Representatives