A

absolute majority  (see also simple majority)
1. An absolute majority is more than half of the total votes of those eligible to vote, even if they are not present. The bill to alter the Constitution was passed by an absolute majority when 85 of the 150 members of the House of Representatives voted for it.
2. An absolute majority is the number by which votes for the leading candidate in an election exceed the votes for all other candidates put together. Since Ms Nyugen received 9000 votes and all other candidates received a combined total of 4000 votes, Ms Nyugen had an absolute majority of 5000.

abstain
To abstain is to voluntarily refrain from casting a vote. The senator could not decide the issue and felt it was best to abstain from the vote.

accountable
To be accountable is to be able to be called on to explain your actions. During Senate Estimates the opposition called on the minister to be accountable for the mismanagement of bushfires in several national parks.

Act of Parliament or Act
An Act of Parliament, is a law made by a parliament. The Act required that food labelling practices apply wherever food is sold, including school events.

adjourn
To adjourn is to put off, postpone or suspend. The chamber agreed to adjourn until the following Monday.

adjournment debate
An adjournment debate is a debate at the end of each sitting day when members and senators make short speeches on any subject. Four members spoke during the adjournment debate—one spoke about electoral matters the others on matters of national interest.

adversarial system
An adversarial system is an approach or system where one person or group opposes another. The Australian Parliament demonstrates the adversarial system because two major parties oppose each other in the chambers.

affirmative
Something is affirmative if it is agreed. Affirmative is the opposite of negative. The bill was passed in the affirmative.

alderman  (see also Councillor)
Alderman is the title for a person elected to local government. The alderman listened to the committee’s request for more areas to be set aside for parklands.

amendment
An amendment is a change to a bill, Act of Parliament or the Australian Constitution. There have been eight amendments to the Australian Constitution since 1901.
appeal
1. An appeal is a request for review by a higher authority. The High Court is the final court of appeal in Australia.
2. An appeal is a request for something needed. The public appeal to the minister to provide more information was followed by a media interview.

appropriation bill
An appropriation bill is a bill which, if passed by parliament, allows executive government to spend money it has gathered from the community (through taxes and charges) on government services such as roads, schools and security. The appropriation bill was tabled during Budget week.

Attorney-General
The Attorney-General is the chief law officer of executive government and the minister responsible for the management of legal matters. The Attorney-General stated that the proposed law was unconstitutional.

Audit-General
The Auditor-General is the chief accounting officer of the federal Parliament. The Auditor-General inspects executive government accounts and reports to the Parliament on whether government departments spend or receive money correctly and legally. The Auditor-General requested that the department produce its annual budget and relevant documents for review.

Australian Coat of Arms or Commonwealth Coat of Arms or Coat of Arms
The Australian Coat of Arms (formally known as the Commonwealth Coat of Arms) consists of a shield containing the badges of the six Australian states supported by an emu and kangaroo. The shield is a symbol for the federation of the states, which took place in 1901. The Commonwealth uses the Coat of Arms to identify its authority and property. The Australian Coat of Arms is a prominent symbol throughout Australia’s Parliament House.

Australian Constitution
The Australian Constitution is the set of rules by which Australia is governed. It provides the authority for the powers of the Australian Parliament, Australian Government and the High Court of Australia. It also covers financial trade matters; the federal relationship between the states and the Commonwealth; the arrangements for a seat of government; and the process for any alteration of the Constitution. The Australian Constitution is a written text that contains elements of both the British and American systems of governance.

Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)
The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is the organisation responsible for running Australian national elections and referendums. The AEC also provides information about elections. Before the election the Australian Electoral Commission issued a booklet informing people about how to vote.

Australian Government (see also Executive the)
The Australian Government is the formal title given to the group of people who administer Australian law, deliver goods and services to the Australian people and make day to day decisions on behalf of Australia. The Australian Government announced a change to child-care policy.

Australian Parliament see Parliament of Australia

aye (see also division)
Aye is the word used for voting ‘yes’ in parliament. The senators who agreed with the bill called out ‘aye’ when the President asked who was in favour of the proposal.

ayes (see also noes)
The ayes are the votes of members of parliament who vote ‘yes’ on a particular matter. The result of the division was 87 ayes and 63 noes.

Bb
backbench
The backbench is those members of parliament who are not ministers or shadow ministers; also known as private members and senators. Most parliamentarians serve on the backbench before becoming ministers or shadow ministers.

backbencher
A backbencher is a member of parliament who is not a minister or a shadow minister. Backbenchers sit behind the front bench (thus on the back bench) in each chamber. The backbencher rose to deliver a speech in support of his electorate.
balance of power
Balance of power is the ability of one person or parliamentary party to decide an issue by the way they vote due to no party having the majority. The Independent senator held the balance of power in the Senate.

ballot
1. A ballot is the group voting process by which a choice is made. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is elected by secret ballot.
2. A ballot is to select by secret vote. A ballot was held to elect the class captain.
3. Ballot is the right to vote. The eighteen year old was eager to embrace the ballot.

ballot-paper
A ballot-paper is a piece of paper that lists the names of those wanting to be elected to parliament (see candidates). Voters mark their choice of person or persons on the ballot-paper. Each voter is given a ballot-paper on polling day.

bicameral
A bicameral parliament consists of two chambers or houses. Australia has a bicameral parliament—its two houses being the House of Representatives and the Senate.

bill
A bill is a proposal for a new law or to modify an existing law that is presented to a parliament. Approximately 200 bills are presented to the federal Parliament each year.

bill of rights
A bill of rights is an Act of Parliament or part of a nation’s constitution stating some of the basic rights of the people of a country. Australian rights are established and protected by several mechanisms that do not include a separate bill of rights.

bipartisan
To be bipartisan is to represent, or have the support of two parties. With all members of the House of Representatives in agreement on the bill, it was passed with bipartisan support.

Black Rod (see also Usher of the Black Rod)
The Black Rod is the staff of office of the Usher of the Black Rod. The Black Rod is made of ebony and bears a silver crown and Australian Coat of Arms.

blue-ribbon seat
A blue-ribbon seat is a seat or electorate where a majority of voters usually vote for the same member or party making it a ‘safe’ seat for that member or party. The member was confident she would again win her blue-ribbon seat.

Budget (the)
The Budget is a plan before a parliament that shows how much money the government expects to collect in the coming year and how it will spend that money. The Budget speech included a plan to spend $10 billion dollars on national roads.

Budget estimates
The Budget estimates are the amounts of money which executive government proposes estimates will be needed for expenditure by government and authorities in the coming year. Details of Budget estimates can be found in the annual appropriation bills.

bureaucracy
A bureaucracy is the group of people who work in or manage government departments. The bureaucracy is often criticised for creating a lot of paperwork.

by-election
A by-election is a special election held to replace a member of the House of Representatives who has ceased to be a member—perhaps because he or she has died or retired between federal elections. A by-election was held to fill the seat of a member who had died suddenly.

by-law
A by-law is a local government rule or regulation. The council by-law stated that all domestic dogs were to be registered.

by leave
By leave is to do something with the permission of every member present in the chamber. By leave of the chamber the senator made an unexpected statement.
Cc

Cabinet (the)
The Cabinet is the key group of decision making ministers in executive government. The Cabinet meets in private to make important decisions.

Cabinet minister
A Cabinet minister is a minister who is one of a group of senior or leading ministers otherwise known as the Cabinet. The Cabinet minister said that the Prime Minister had her full support.

Cabinet Room
The Cabinet Room is a special room in Parliament House where the leading ministers meet. The Cabinet Room is highly secure and is regularly checked for electronic devices.

campaign
A campaign is a competition for votes by people who are seeking a place in parliament. The election campaign ran for two weeks prior to the election day.

candidate
A candidate is someone who stands for election to parliament. Of the five candidates on the ballot-paper, only one gained a place in the federal Parliament.

carried
A motion that is carried is agreed. The amendment to the immigration bill was carried.

cast a vote
To cast a vote is to make a choice between candidates by filling in a ballot-paper. Each eligible person is expected to cast a vote on election day.

casting vote
A casting vote is a vote which decides the matter when votes are equally divided. The Speaker of the House of Representatives does not vote in a division unless the vote is tied in which case he or she has a casting vote.

casual vacancy
A casual vacancy is a vacancy in the Senate that is caused when a senator dies or resigns before his or her term has expired. When the senator resigned unexpectedly, her state parliament appointed someone from the same political party to fill her seat.

caucus
Caucus is a group of parliamentarians who belong to a particular parliamentary party. The term is usually used in relation to the Australian Labor Party. Caucus met to decide whether they would support the private member’s bill.

censure motion
A censure motion is a motion moved in either the Senate or the House of Representatives which expresses disapproval of a particular minister, his or her policy, or of the government. If a censure motion is carried in the House of Representatives it is traditional for the government to resign.

chair
1. The chair is the person who is in charge of a meeting.
2. The chair is someone who is occupying their place, for example the Speaker or President, the Acting Speaker or the Deputy President. Senators and members bow to the chair when entering or leaving the chamber.

chamber (see also house of parliament)
1. A chamber is meeting room of a house of parliament. In Australia’s federal Parliament there are two chambers—the House of Representatives and the Senate. Either or both of these chambers may be referred to as a house.
2. A chamber is a law-making body. A bill must be agreed in both chambers before royal approval may be sought.

chief minister
A chief minister is the elected leader of the political party or parties that form a territory government. The chief minister congratulated her team on winning the election.
citizen
1. A citizen is a person owing allegiance to a government and entitled to its protection. The Australian citizen took shelter in the Australian embassy while overseas.
2. A citizen is an inhabitant of a city or town, especially one entitled to its rights and liberties. The travelling citizen felt relieved to be home.

civic
1. Civic refers to a city or municipality. In his speech, the mayor spoke of his pride in the city’s new civic development.
2. Civic relates to that which is befitting a citizen or individual. The civic movement helped fix the problem of street pollution.

clause (see also section)
A clause is a separate numbered item in a bill. The Senate agreed to the bill after an important clause was amended.

Clerk (of the House of Representatives or Senate)
The Clerk is the most senior parliamentary officer in each chamber. The Clerk records the decisions of the chamber. The Clerk read the title of the bill for a third time.

closure motion (see gag)

coalition
A coalition is the joining together of two or more parliamentary parties to form a government or an opposition. The Liberal Party of Australia and the Nationals formed a coalition government.

Coat of Arms or Commonwealth Coat of Arms (see Australian Coat of Arms)

commission
A commission is one or more people who have been instructed to inquire into certain matters or who have been given particular official duties. A commission was set up to investigate the increasing crime rate.

committee (see also parliamentary committee)
A committee is a group of people selected from a larger group to discuss, investigate or report on a particular subject. The committee flew to Western Australia to see a wind farm in operation.

committee of the whole
Committee of the whole is an optional stage in the passage of a bill when the Senate considers a bill in detail using more flexible debating rules. During this stage amendments to the text of the bill may be moved. During committee of the whole the Senate agreed to make several amendments to the bill.

committee secretary
A committee secretary is a parliamentary officer who looks after the support arrangements for a parliamentary committee, including correspondence, record-keeping, research and arrangements for meetings where people give evidence. The committee secretary often prepares the first draft of a committee’s report. The secretary worked with committee members to ensure that a wide range of opinions were heard.

common law
Common law, is law based on custom or court decisions, as distinct from statute law. Common law is sometimes referred to as judge made or unwritten law.

commonwealth
A commonwealth is an association of states or nations that are self governing and share a common purpose. Australia is a participant in the Commonwealth of Nations.

Commonwealth of Australia
The Commonwealth of Australia is the Australian community. The Commonwealth of Australia is bound by the Australian Constitution. The Prime Minister and the leaders of the states and territories met to decide how the Commonwealth of Australia would respond to the threat of terrorism.

confidence of the House
The government is said to have the confidence of the House, if it has the support of more than half the members of the House of Representatives. This may be shown by voting on a particular issue. The government proved that it continued to have the confidence of the House when the motion of no confidence was defeated.

conscience vote (see free vote)
consensus
Consensus is general agreement or accord. The non-controversial bill passed with the consensus of both chambers.

consideration in detail
Consideration in detail is an optional stage in the passage of a bill when when the House of Representatives considers a bill in detail and may move amendments to the text of the bill. During consideration in detail the House of Representatives agreed to make amendments to the bill.

constituent
A constituent is someone who votes or lives in an electorate or area represented by a member of parliament. The constituent’s petition was acknowledged in the parliament.

constitution
A constitution is the set of rules by which a country or state is run. Australia’s Constitution came into force on 1 January 1901.

constitutional monarchy
A constitutional monarchy is a country in which a king or queen is the head of state but has to act in accordance with the constitution. Australia is governed by a constitutional monarchy, since our head of state is the Queen.

council
A council is the elected body in charge of legislation for a small local area such as a shire, city or municipality. The council proposed a new by-law to protect pedestrians in high traffic locations.

council chamber
The council chamber is the room where a local council meets. The council chamber was in a heritage building in the main street of the town.

Councillor (see also alderman)
Councillor is the title for a person elected to local government. The councillor was cheered by business people pleased to hear that a new car park was being planned.

count-out
A count-out is an adjournment for lack of a quorum. The chamber was adjourned when a count-out revealed too few parliamentarians to continue the business of the chamber.

court
1. One or more judges acting as a tribunal to determine questions of law. The court decided that the action taken by the company was legal.
2. The place where legal cases and trials are heard. Many people gathered in the court to witness the case being heard.

crossbench
The crossbench refers to the seats in the Senate for senators who do not belong to either the government or the opposition. The crossbench is usually occupied by minor parties and/or independent senators. The crossbench split during the vote on the controversial bill.

cross the floor
To cross the floor is to vote against your party in a way that involves moving from one side of the chamber to the other. The government member crossed the floor and voted with the opposition in support of the people in her electorate.

Dd

Daily Program
The Daily Program is the daily agenda showing items of business to be dealt with in the House of Representatives in a particular day. The Daily Program is known as the ‘Blue’.

deadlock
A deadlock is a situation where the Senate fails for a second time, within a specified time-frame, to pass a bill in the same form as the House of Representatives. The House and the Senate were in deadlock when neither could agree on the final wording of the bill.
debate
A debate is a controlled discussion on a bill or other topic in which different views are put forward. The debate on the ASIO bill triggered a lot of discussion which led to many amendments.

deleagated legislation
Delegated legislation is law in the form of regulations, orders, guidelines or rules, which an Act of Parliament allows a minister or the Governor-General to make. The proposed delegated legislation was scrutinised by a parliamentary committee.

democracy
1. A democracy is a system of government where the people elect representatives to govern for them. Australia is a democracy.
2. A democracy is a country that has such a government. The Australian democracy provides for regular election of federal representatives.
3. Democracy is the idea that everyone in a country has equal rights. E B White once said; ‘a democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time.’

departmental secretary
A departmental secretary is a public servant who is the head of a government department. The departmental secretary to the Department of Health and Ageing gave evidence during the inquiry.

despatch boxes
The despatch boxes are the two ornamental boxes on the table of the House of Representatives from which the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, ministers and shadow ministers give their speeches. The despatch boxes were a gift to the Australian Parliament by King George V.

dictatorship
A dictatorship is a system of government in which one person or group has total power to govern a country with no parliamentary opposition. The country of Cuba operates under a dictatorship.

dissolution
(see also double dissolution)
A dissolution is an order given by the head of state to bring to an end the life of a parliament and which necessitates an election. The Governor-General announced the dissolution of the federal Parliament.

division
1. A division is the separation of members or senators to either side of the chamber to vote for or against a bill, amendment or motion. A division is counted and recorded. During the division a member crossed the floor, to the dismay of his party.
2. A division is one of the parts that a country or state is divided into for the purpose of holding elections. The division of Brisbane is in Queensland.

division bells
The division bells are electronic bells that ring through clocks in Parliament House. Division bells call members of parliament into the House of Representatives or Senate at the beginning of a meeting, because a vote is about to be taken, or because there are not enough members in the chamber. When the division bells began ringing the members had four minutes to get to the chamber to vote.

Dorothy Dix question or Dorothy Dixer
A Dorothy Dix question is a question asked in parliament by a member or senator, in the minister’s knowledge, which allows a minister to give a prepared reply. The government backbencher asked the Health Minister a Dorothy Dixer about the increased refund on private medical insurance.

double dissolution (see also dissolution)
A double dissolution is an act of the Governor-General which dissolves the Senate and the House of Representatives simultaneously, resulting in the termination of all business before them, and the calling of an election to return members for all seats in both houses. A double dissolution may occur only in circumstances of deadlock between the houses. Section 57 of the Constitution gives the Governor-General the power to call a double dissolution.

draft bill
A draft bill is an early version of a proposed law before it is introduced to the parliament. The member distributed a draft bill for the consideration of others in her party.
Ee

economy
1. An economy is the total activities involved in the production, exchange and consumption of goods and services within a nation or confined area. The running of the national economy is the main concern of the Treasurer.
2. An economy is the use and management of the resources of a community, with a view to increasing productivity and avoiding waste.

election
An election is when a person or government is chosen by voting. A federal election is held at least once every three years for membership of Australia’s federal Parliament.

elector
An elector is a person who votes or is eligible to vote. All Australian citizens aged 18 years and over who are enrolled to vote are electors.

electoral roll
An electoral roll is a list naming all the people who are entitled to vote. All Australian citizens aged 18 years and over are required to place their name on the electoral roll.

electorate
1. An electorate is a geographical area represented by a member of parliament. The federal member was very keen to promote safe driving and safe roads in her electorate.
2. An electorate is all the people who live in an area represented by a member of parliament. The member represents the interests of his or her electorate in federal Parliament.

electorate office
An electorate office is where members work when parliament is not meeting in Canberra. The office is located within the electorate area. The member met a group of constituents in her electorate office.

estimates committee
Estimates committees are legislative and general purpose standing committees of the Senate which meet during set periods of the year, to scrutinise proposed spending, actions and decisions by executive government. During the estimates committee several senators questioned the departmental secretary about her department’s expenditure over the last six months.

exclusive power
Exclusive power is the power that only the federal Parliament has, by the Australian Constitution, to exclusively make laws in certain areas for the whole country. State parliaments may not legislate in these areas. The federal Parliament has exclusive power to make defence and communication laws.

Executive (the) and executive government (see also ministry)
1. The Executive is the subset of government which carries out or administers law.
2. The Executive includes the Governor-General and ministers from the governing party who make policy and control government departments, and who are answerable to the Parliament for the way they run the government. The Executive is responsible for determining when and where the Australian defence force goes into operation.

executive power
Executive power is the power to administer the law, and one of the three powers under the Constitution, the others being legislative power (exercised by the Parliament) and judicial power (exercised by the High Court of Australia and other courts). The minister used executive power to set up new offices with the task of administering the new law.

expenditure
Expenditure is the act of spending or the amount spent. Expenditure on roads increased last year.

explanatory memorandum
An explanatory memorandum is a paper which explains the purpose and details of bills or regulations, usually in a simple and less technical way. An explanatory memorandum was handed out with each copy of the bill so that the bill could be more easily understood.
**Ff**

**federal**
Federal means having to do with the Parliament of Australia and/or Australian Government rather than state parliaments and/or state governments. The federal Parliament creates laws that apply to the whole country.

**federal election**
A federal election is the voting process for all the seats in the House of Representatives and usually half the seats of each state, in the Senate. The federal election led to a change of government and a new Prime Minister of Australia.

**Federal Executive Council**
The Federal Executive Council is the council of ministers which advises the Governor-General and gives legal form to Cabinet decisions. The Federal Executive Council met to consider the new diplomatic appointment.

**federal member**
A federal member is a member of parliament who represents a federal electorate in the House of Representatives. The federal member was happy to support the thriving local community of daffodil growers.

**federal Parliament** (see also Parliament of Australia, the Parliament)
The federal Parliament refers to the national Parliament (as distinct from state parliaments). The federal Parliament consists of the elected members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the Queen. The federal parliament is also known as the Parliament of Australia, the Australian Parliament, the Parliament and the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia. The federal Parliament meets at Parliament House in Canberra.

**federal government** see Australian Government

**federalism**
Federalism is a system of government in which powers and responsibilities are divided between a federal government and regional or state governments. Federalism operates throughout Australia since the responsibility to govern is shared between the Commonwealth and the states.

**federation**
a federation is a nation formed by the union of a number of states which give up some of their power to a central government. The Australian federation was formed on 1 January 1901.

**filibuster**
To filibuster is to use long speeches or other tactics in parliament deliberately to delay proceedings. The filibuster tactic left the member hoarse and tired.

**first reading stage**
The first reading is the first of three principal stages that mark the passage of a bill to an Act, when the Clerk reads the long title of the bill to the chamber for the first time. A bill passes through the first reading stage in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

**first speech**
The first speech (formerly known as the maiden speech) is the first formal speech in parliament by a newly elected member or senator, during which they are traditionally heard without interruption. The member was heard without interruption as she delivered her maiden speech.

**foreign affairs**
Foreign affairs refers to a country’s relations with other countries. Australia has a Minister for Foreign Affairs.

**freedom of information**
Freedom of information is the principle that citizens should have the right to see most government reports and papers, particularly those that relate to their personal affairs. The media obtained sensitive information by using their right to freedom of information.

**free vote**
A free vote is a vote in parliament in which members or senators are free to vote according to their own judgment or belief and not necessarily according to the guidelines, policies or decisions of their political party. The debate prior to the free vote attracted a lot of media attention.

**frontbench**
The frontbench is those members of parliament who are ministers or shadow ministers and who sit on the front bench of the chamber. The Minister for Finance is a member of the government frontbench.
frontbencher
A frontbencher is a member of parliament who is a minister or a shadow minister. Frontbenchers sit on the front bench in each chamber. The frontbencher rose to answer a question from an opposition backbencher.

Gg

gag
A gag is a procedure for closing a discussion in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. It is also known as a closure motion, in which a senator or member may move that a vote be taken to decide a question under consideration immediately, without further debate. Members of the minor parties were annoyed when a gag prevented them from delivering their speeches.

governance
Governance is the act of governing a country and the exercise of authority. In Australia federal governance is shared between three authorities: the Parliament of Australia, the Australian Government and the High Court of Australia.

government
1. The government is the party or coalition of parties that wins the most seats in the House of Representatives. The government majority of 20 seats meant that the bill easily passed the House.
2. Government means to rule, to administer or to control. Government is meant to be of the people, by the people, for the people.
3. Government is the form or system of rule by which a country or state is governed. Australia’s system of government is a representative democracy.
4. The executive or administrative body of a nation or state. He was on a pension administered by the government.

government backbencher
A government backbencher is a member of parliament who belongs to the party or coalition of parties that is in government but who is not a minister. Government backbenchers are both members and senators. The government backbencher gave firm support to the minister’s proposal.

government business
Government business is the business of the House of Representatives or the Senate, which is introduced by a minister. If a minister introduces a bill to the house, it is listed in the government business section of the Notice Paper.

government department
A government department is a group of public servants organised to administer a particular area of government activity, under the control of a minister. A representative of the government department responsible for the environment presented information to a Senate committee.

governor
A governor is the representative of the Queen in each state of Australia. The governors of the six Australian states gathered to celebrate one hundred years of federation.

Governor-General
The Governor-General is the representative of the Queen and the nominal head of national government in Australia. The former Governor-General made a speech on behalf of all Australians at the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games.

grievance debate
The grievance debate is a weekly debate in the House of Representatives when any member may speak on any matter of concern. During a grievance debate, a member condemned the closure of a Medicare office in her electorate.

guillotine
A guillotine is a procedure to limit discussion on a bill or bills, when the Senate can agree that a matter is urgent and set a timeframe for completing the remaining stages. The guillotine placed on the debate of the airports bill prevented the independent senator from making his speech to the chamber.

Hh

Hansard
Hansard is the daily record of the words spoken in parliament. The student accessed Hansard records from 1988 on the Parliament of Australia website.
**head of state**
The head of state is the formal leader of a country or group of people organised under one government. When a head of state visits the Parliament his or her national flag is flown.

**High Court of Australia**
The High Court of Australia is the judicial power set up under the Australian Constitution to rule on disputes that arise from the Constitution, and to hear appeals from other federal courts and the supreme courts of each state. Most sittings of the High Court of Australia take place in Canberra.

**honourable**
Honourable is a title reserved for current and former ministers, and for certain other people such as the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The honourable member retired after a long and distinguished career in the federal Parliament.

**House of Assembly**
The House of Assembly is the name of the lower house of parliament in the state parliaments of South Australia and Tasmania. The House of Assembly sat late into the night.

**House of Commons**
The House of Commons is one of two houses of parliament in the United Kingdom and Canada, in which members are elected on the basis of population. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom sits in the House of Commons.

**House of Lords**
The House of Lords is one of two houses of parliament in the United Kingdom comprising hereditary, appointed and elected members. The House of Lords is also known as the upper house.

**house of parliament or house (see also chamber)**
A house is a separate part of a law-making body. The Australian Parliament has two houses—the House of Representatives and the Senate.

**House of Representatives (see also people’s house)**
The House of Representatives is one of two federal houses of the Australian Parliament. The House of Representatives is also known as the lower house, the people’s house or the House. Visitors to the Parliament of Australia sat in the public galleries and watched Question Time in the House of Representatives.

**house of review**
The Senate is sometimes called the house of review, meaning a house which provides a second look or a close re-examination of matters considered in the House of Representatives. The bill was sent to a Senate committee in the house of review.

**how-to-vote card**
A how-to-vote card is a card or piece of paper handed out at an election by a political party or candidate showing the voter how the party or candidate would prefer the voter to vote. The first-time voter appreciated the distribution of how-to-vote cards.

**in camera**
To be in camera is to be in private or in secret. The witness appearing before the parliamentary committee asked to give evidence in camera.

**Independent**
An Independent is a member of parliament who does not belong to a political party. The Independent senator stated that he did not agree with the recommendations being put forward by either of the two major parties.

**informal vote**
An informal vote is a voting paper which is not counted during a federal election because it has not been filled in correctly. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) was pleased by the drop in informal votes.

**in order**
To be in order is to be in agreement with the rules of parliamentary procedure. The President ruled that the question was in order.

**interest group**
An interest group is a body of people organised to further a cause or an interest which they have in common. Members of parliament often get letters from interest groups seeking their support.
interjection
An interjection is a remark made to interrupt or respond to a point during a speech or conversation. The Minister’s speech was interrupted by a loud interjection from the public galleries.

Jj

joint committee
A joint committee is a parliamentary committee made up of members of both houses of parliament. The joint committee demonstrated the ability of both houses to work together to solve a problem.

joint sitting
A joint sitting is a combined meeting of the House of Representatives and Senate in one chamber, usually to make a decision on a proposed law which the two houses, sitting separately, have been unable to agree on. A joint sitting of the parliament was required to finally resolve the legislative deadlock.

Journals of the Senate
The Journals of the Senate are the official records or minutes of meetings of the Senate. The proposed amendments to the bill were recorded in the Journals of the Senate.

judge
A judge is someone whose job is to hear and decide cases in a court of law. Australia’s judges work in a number of courts including the High Court of Australia, federal courts and the supreme courts.

judicial power
Judicial power is the power to interpret or apply the law and one of three powers under the Constitution, the others being legislative power (exercised by the Parliament) and executive power (exercised by the Executive). The judge defended the court’s judicial power when the minister criticised his interpretation of the law.

Judiciary (the)
1. The Judiciary is the branch of Australian governance concerned with the administration of justice. It is made up of the system of courts and judges. The Judiciary responded to laws proposing mandatory consequences for first time offenders.

2. The Judiciary is a term which applies to the collection of people who hold the office of judge.

justice
Justice is the act of doing what is right and fair. In Australia the system of courts and judges is responsible for seeing that justice is done.

Kk
There are no listings for K.

LI

law
1. A law is a rule or set of rules recognised by society as binding. Australia operates by the principle of rule of law.

2. The law is the area of knowledge or occupation that has to do with these rules. The student studying law hoped to gain a position in the parliament.

Leader of the Government in the Senate
The Leader of the Government in the Senate is a senator and the government’s most senior minister in the Senate. He or she is chosen to lead the government party in the Senate. The Leader of the Government in the Senate indicated that government senators would support the motion.

Leader of the House
The Leader of the House is a member, chosen by the government, who arranges and manages government business in the House of Representatives. The Leader of the House announced the time at which the House would finish that day.

Leader of the Opposition
The Leader of the Opposition is the leader of the party which is second largest to the government in the House of Representatives, and which is made up of members and senators who do not support the government. The Leader of the Opposition called on the Australian people to vote for members of his team at the upcoming federal election.
The Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
The Leader of the Opposition in the Senate is a senator and the opposition’s main spokesperson in the Senate. He or she leads the opposition party in the Senate. The Leader of the Opposition in the Senate stated clearly that the opposition would reject the bill.

leave
Leave is granted to a member or senator, with the permission of all members or senators present in the chamber at the time, to do something which is not provided for in the standing orders and which otherwise could not be done at that time or in that way. The minister asked for leave of the House to make a statement. The chamber granted leave.

legislation
1. Legislation is a law or set of laws. Parliament passed new legislation to lower the voting age.
2. Legislation is the act of making laws.

Legislative Assembly
The Legislative Assembly is the name of one of two houses of parliament elected on the basis of population, in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. It is the name of the only house in Queensland, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory. Most of Australia’s Legislative Assemblies are decorated in shades of green in the same way that the federal lower house is predominantly green.

Legislative Council
The Legislative Council is one of two houses of parliament in all states except Queensland which, like the territories, has only one house. Most of Australia’s Legislative Councils are decorated in shades of red in the same way that the federal upper house is predominantly red.

legislative power
Legislative power is the power to make and change laws, and one of the three powers under the Constitution, the other powers being judicial power (exercised by the High Court of Australia and other courts) and executive power (exercised by the Executive). The Parliament of Australia uses its legislative power to create laws that apply to the whole country.

Legislature (the)
The legislature is the law-making body of a country or state. Australia has three levels of legislature—one federal legislature; six state and two territory legislatures and over 650 legislatures at the local level.

lobby
1. A lobby is a group of people trying to get support for a cause. The environmental lobby made a statement to the committee of inquiry.
2. To lobby is to approach people for support. The spokesperson for ‘Save our Rainforests’ visited the Minister for the Environment to lobby her for support.

local governance
Local governance is the management of the affairs of a shire, city, municipality, borough or town by people who are elected by the residents of that area to make by-laws which relate to matters of local interest.

local government
Local government refers to the non-elected people who administer local by-laws and who are usually employees of a council. Local government is responsible for providing government services to the local community such as park and sports fields, street lighting and signs, libraries and town swimming pools.

long title
The long title of a bill is the full title of a bill which sets out briefly the scope of the bill. The Clerk read the long title of the Immigration Bill 2006 to the house.

lord mayor
A lord mayor is the head of the main council of a capital city. The Lord Mayor was shocked by the increase in vandalism throughout the city.

lower house
Lower house is the name sometimes given to the House of Representatives. The lower house is generally the larger house parliament with two chambers whose members represent electorates with a similar numbers of voters. The lower house is sometimes called the people’s house or the first chamber.
Mm

Mace
The Mace is a symbol of the authority of the House of Representatives and of the Speaker. The Mace is carried by the Serjeant-at-Arms. The Mace was originally a weapon of war that was shaped like a club.

maiden speech (see first speech)

Main Committee (see also second chamber)
The Main Committee is a smaller second chamber of the House of Representatives in Parliament House. The Main Committee exists to give members more time and opportunity to debate bills that are not controversial. The Main Committee is sometimes called the second chamber. The non-controversial bill was debated in the Main Committee.

majority
A majority is the greater number, or more than half. The government has the majority in the House of Representatives.

mandate
A mandate is the authority which a parliamentary party which wins government may believe it has to implement policies which were the subject of an election campaign. The government claimed it had a mandate to increase spending on the armed forces because it had campaigned on that issue and won the election.

marginal
Marginal is the term used to describe an electorate where the result of an election will probably be close because it is held by a small margin. The member won her marginal seat by just three votes.

Matter of Public Importance or MPI
A matter of public importance or MPI is a debating opportunity when members or senators agree to discuss public policy and government performance and where a vote is taken at the end of the discussion. The Matter of Public Importance listed for today is unemployment.

Matter of Urgency (see urgency motion)

mayor
A mayor is the person elected to lead a city or shire council. The mayor chaired the council meeting.

media
1. The media is made up of people such as journalists who work for radio, television, magazines and newspapers. The media reported on the Treasurer's budget speech.
2. The media is a system of communication and includes radio, television, magazines and newspapers.

member
A member is a person who is elected to the House of Representatives. There are 150 members in the current House of Representatives.

member of parliament (see also MP)
A member of parliament is a member of either house of parliament. The current Parliament is made up of a total of 226 members of parliament.

minister
A minister is both a member of parliament and a member of the Executive. This means that a minister is usually in charge of a government department that is responsible for enacting the law. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is responsible for putting related laws into action throughout Australia.

ministerial responsibility
Ministerial responsibility is the principle that ministers are accountable to the parliament for their actions and decisions and for actions and decisions taken on their behalf. Ministerial responsibility is a key feature of the Australian system of governance.

ministry (see also the Executive and executive government)
The ministry is the collective body of government ministers headed by a prime minister, who are formally appointed by the Governor-General as his or her ministers of state and together with the Governor-General form the Executive. The ministry contains both senior and junior ministers.
minority
A minority is less than half. In parliament the minority is the group of parliamentarians who are smaller in number at the time of voting. People who hold those views are in the minority.

minority government
A minority government is a government formed by a party or coalition of parties and Independents, which does not have a majority in the House of Representatives in its own right. A minority government is more common in Australian state parliaments than the federal parliament.

minor party
A minor party is a political party that has significantly fewer members in parliament than the largest political parties in a parliament. The minor party presented a platform that was markedly different to the platform of the larger parties.

monarch
A monarch is a sole ruler of a country who usually inherits the position, such as a king or queen. The current monarch of Australia is Queen Elizabeth II.

monarchy
A monarchy is a country ruled by one person who usually inherits the position, such as a king or queen. The British monarchy has been established for hundreds of years.

money bill
A money bill is a bill setting a tax or proposing the spending of money for a particular purpose. Money bills must not be first introduced in the Senate.

motion
A motion is an idea or proposal put forward at a meeting of the House of Representatives or the Senate for consideration, debate and decision. The minister moved a motion that the member be suspended.

move (a motion)
To move a motion is to make a formal proposal at a meeting. The senator moved a motion to suspend business until the next day.

MP
MP stands for Member of Parliament. However it is specifically reserved for members of the House of Representatives who may use the initials MP after their names. Senators, while being members of parliament, do not use these initials. The first federal Cabinet of 1901 decided that members (and not senators) should use the abbreviation MP.

municipality
A municipality is an area of land which has its own local government. There over 650 separate municipalities throughout Australia.

Nn
no
‘No’ is the word used for showing disagreement to a proposal in parliament. The Speaker asked all those in favour to say “aye” and those against to say ‘no’.

no confidence
A vote or a motion of no confidence is a means by which the House or Senate expresses dissatisfaction with the performance of the government or a minister. The minister’s position was threatened when the opposition moved a vote of no confidence in him.

noes
The noes are the votes of members of parliament who vote ‘no’ on a particular matter.

non-government member
A non-government member is any member of the House of Representatives who does not belong to or support the government. Non-government members of the House of Representatives sit on the benches to the left and front of the Speaker.

notice of motion
A notice of motion is an announcement of intention to put forward a motion for consideration, nearly always for a later day. The member of parliament introduced a notice of motion during the day’s proceedings.
Notice Paper
The Notice Paper is a document that is updated and published each sitting day and which lists all outstanding business before either house. The Notice Paper lists orders of the day, notices of motion, notices of intention to present bills, as well as questions on notice.

Oo

oath of allegiance
An oath of allegiance is a declaration, using God’s name, made by members of parliament stating that they will be loyal to the Queen. Members of parliament may also choose to make an affirmation of allegiance which does not use God’s name. The new members of parliament made an oath of allegiance to the Queen during their swearing-in ceremony.

Office of Parliamentary Counsel
The Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) is an office of legal workers who draft or prepare proposals for new government laws. The Office of Parliamentary Counsel drafted the new bill dealing with workplace relations.

ombudsman
An ombudsman is an official whose job is to look into people’s complaints against executive government or public servants. The ombudsman investigated complaints from people who felt unfairly treated by the government department.

opposition
The opposition is the second largest parliamentary party or coalition of parties after the government in the House of Representatives. The opposition opposes what it believes to be wrong in government policies or actions. The opposition is also Australia’s alternative government should voters decide in their favour during a federal election. The opposition met in their party room to discuss Question Time tactics.

opposition backbencher
An opposition backbencher is a member of parliament who belongs to the opposition party or parties, but who is not a shadow minister. The opposition backbencher abstained from voting on the controversial bill.

order
1. Order is the correct or proper actions or conduct in meetings of a house or committee. Mr President called for order in the proceedings when senators became disruptive.
2. An order is a decision of the House of Representatives or the Senate which results in the issuing of directions to committees, parliamentarians and officers. If the House of Representatives agrees to the motion, then the witness will be under order of the House to give evidence.

Order of Business
The Order of Business is the daily agenda showing items of business to be dealt with in the Senate in a particular day. The Order of Business in the Senate is also known as the ‘Red’.

Pp

parliament
In Australia, a parliament consists of a group of elected representatives and a person who represents the Queen. In the federal Parliament that person is the Governor-General. Parliaments make the laws for a country or a state. The parliament sat late into the night debating the complex proposal to modify the law.

Parliament (the) (see Parliament of Australia)

Parliament House

Parliament of Australia (also Australian Parliament, the Parliament)
The Parliament of Australia is an assembly of elected representatives, consisting of the Queen (represented by the Governor-General), the Senate, and the House of Representatives, that makes laws for the Australian people and residents. The Parliament of Australia meets regularly in Canberra.

parliamentarian
A parliamentarian is a person who is elected at a democratic election to serve in a parliament. In the federal Parliament, parliamentarians are either members or senators. The parliamentarian represented Australia at the international conference.
parliamentary committee  (see also committee)
A parliamentary committee is a small group of members of parliament, usually from all parliamentary parties in one or both chambers, which studies, reports on, and makes recommendations about a particular subject. A parliamentary committee was set up to inquire into ways to improve road safety.

parliamentary government
Parliamentary government is a system of government in which the Executive is answerable to the parliament and in which executive government is drawn from members of the parliament. Thus the parliament is supreme because it can make or break governments. Australia’s system of parliamentary government is similar to but not the same as the United Kingdom’s system of government.

parliamentary officer
A parliamentary officer is a career official or employee of a parliamentary department which provides support services for a parliament. The Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the House of Representatives are the two most senior parliamentary officers of the Parliament.

parliamentary party
A parliamentary party is a party with at least one member elected to a parliament. The Family First party became a federal parliamentary party with just one senator in 2004.

parliamentary procedure
Parliamentary procedure refers to the set of rules and methods for carrying out the business of a house of parliament. Parliamentary procedure states that the Serjeant-at-Arms precedes the Speaker into the chamber.

parliamentary secretary
A parliamentary secretary is a member of parliament appointed by executive government to assist a minister with his or her work. The parliamentary secretary sat beside the minister.

Parliamentary Triangle or parliamentary zone
The Parliamentary Triangle is a small area in Canberra in which the federal Parliament is situated and over which the Parliament has certain regulatory powers. The Parliamentary Triangle is bound by Capital Circle, Kings Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue Bridges and the southern shore of Lake Burley Griffin.

party  (see parliamentary party and political party)

party discipline
Party discipline is the control used by a parliamentary party to encourage its members in parliament to vote together. Party discipline in Australia is strong. Members of the major parties rarely vote against their party.

party-political
To be party-political is to focus on the affairs or interests of a political party, sometimes to the benefit of the party and not necessarily the benefit of the public. Most commentators realised that it was a party-political action.

party room
A party room is the room where the parliamentary members of a political party hold meetings. The members met in the party room to discuss tactics for the upcoming election campaign.

people’s house
The people’s house is the name sometimes used to refer to the House of Representatives reflecting that its members represent electorates of roughly equal population. The debate in the people's house reflected the variety of opinions on the subject.

petition
A petition is a document presented to a parliament by a person or group of people asking for action on a matter. The petition containing over 5000 signatures was tabled in the House of Representatives.

platform
A platform is a policy or plan put forward by a political party or candidate or a collection of such policies or plans. The party’s major platform was environmental reform.

plebiscite
A plebiscite is a vote taken by electors Australia wide on a question of national importance, but not a constitutional matter. The plebiscite revealed that majority opinion was in favour of the change.
point of order
Calling a point of order is to question whether proceedings in a meeting are in accord with the rules or in a correct form. The Deputy Speaker called a point of order when the member used unparliamentary language.

policy
A policy is a plan of action on a matter which is often based in an ideological position. Each party presented a different policy on education.

political party
A political party is a group of people with similar ideas or aims, some of whose members stand at elections in the hope that they will be able to form government. The Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party of Australia and the Nationals are all political parties.

politics
1. Politics is the activity associated with the governance of a state or country. When I leave university I want a career in politics.
2. Politics refers to the activities involved in gaining or wielding power or success. The chairman of the board understood the politics of the company very well.

poll
1. A poll is a count of people, votes or opinions. The poll recorded the number of people for and against the proposal.
2. To poll is to ask and record the opinion of the people. The prime minister agreed that the poll reflected a deep level of community concern.
3. To poll is to receive a number of votes. The new party polled well during the election.
4. To go to the poll is to hold an election. The minority parties went to the poll hoping to win four more seats.

polling day
Polling day is the day on which the people vote in an election. Polling day fell on the day of the grand final causing a lot of people to vote early.

portfolio
A portfolio is the area of responsibility or duties of a minister. In the Cabinet reshuffle the minister was given the defence portfolio.

power
1. Power is the right or ability to do something.
2. Power is control, influence or authority over others. The government majority in both chambers gave the government the power to make changes.

prayers
A prayer is a spiritual communication. As part of the daily procedure in parliament, prayers are said at the beginning of each sitting day. A prayer is said before work begins in each chamber.

preferential voting
Preferential voting is a system of voting in which a voter shows an order of preference for candidates, giving the number one to his or her first choice and the last number to the last choice. Preferential voting is used in elections for the House of Representatives.

premier
A premier is the elected leader of the political party or parties that form state government. The premier resigned due to poor health.

President
The President is the senator who is elected by the Senate as its presiding officer to run the sessions of parliament in the Senate. The President of the Senate usually casts a vote.

presiding officer
A presiding officer is a member of parliament elected to be in charge of the proceedings and administration of a house of parliament. In the Senate the presiding officer is called the President and in the House of Representatives the presiding officer is called the Speaker. The presiding officers called on all parliamentarians to represent the Parliament well.
press conference
A press conference is a meeting between a person and reporters from newspapers, radio and television (the press), usually so the person can make an announcement or answer questions. The press conference was held in the courtyards of Parliament House.

press gallery
1. The press gallery is a seating area set aside in each chamber specifically for press reporters. There were eight reporters in the press gallery during the debate on the food labelling bill.
3. The press gallery is the group of people who work for the media in Parliament House. Members of the press gallery asked many questions of the Prime Minister at the press conference.

press release
A press release is an announcement, statement or item of news prepared for and given to the press. The minister’s press release announced an increase in funding to schools.

prime minister
The prime minister is the person chosen to lead the parliamentary party or coalition of parties that wins the most seats in the House of Representatives. The prime minister also leads the Executive. The Prime Minister of Australia flew to England for talks with the British Prime Minister.

private member
A private member is a member of the House of Representatives who is not a minister. The private member put forward a bill, which the chamber voted not to hear.

private senator
A private senator is a senator who is not a minister. The private senator introduced a controversial bill to the Senate.

privilege (parliamentary)
Parliamentary privilege is the special legal protection granted to members and senators when they are elected to office, which enables them to carry out their duties. Privilege includes protection from legal action for words said in parliament. The senator was called to retract the statement he made under parliamentary privilege.

proceedings
Proceedings are the formal actions and decisions of a house of parliament. The proceedings of a house of parliament are always recorded.

proclamation
1. A proclamation is an official public announcement. The day for a new federal parliament to assemble is fixed by the Governor-General by proclamation.
2. A proclamation is the act of announcing the commencement of an Act or part of an Act. The proclamation of the new Act led to renewed discussion about its implementation.

proportional representation
Proportional representation is an electoral system such that all political parties are represented in proportion to the percentage of the total vote won by the party. Proportional representation in the Senate is designed to elect multiple senators to represent each state and territory.

prologue
To prorogue the parliament is to end a session of parliament and so discontinue meetings of the houses until the next session without an election intervening. Only the Governor-General can prorogue the federal Parliament.

Provisional Parliament House
The first parliament house built in Canberra was known as Provisional Parliament House. It was built as a temporary home for the Parliament of Australia and was intended to meet the needs of the Parliament for fifty years. Provisional Parliament House is now commonly known as Old Parliament House and it attracts many visitors each year.

public gallery
The public gallery is an area in Parliament House set aside for the public to view proceedings. When our school visited Parliament House we watched Question Time from the public gallery.
A public servant is a person employed under executive government. The quarantine officer enjoyed being a public servant.

The public service refers to government departments and agencies, and the people who work for them. The public service is responsible for putting into effect government policy and decisions and legislation passed by the Parliament. The public service includes a range of government departments and offices such as Centrelink and Medicare.

To put the question is to ask for a decision on a motion. The Speaker put the question to the House.

The Queen is Australia’s head of state. Since 1973, the Queen’s formal Australian title has been ‘Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God Queen of Australia and Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth’. The Queen visited Australia during the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

The question is a matter to be debated and voted on. The question ‘that the bill be read a second time’ was put and agreed to.

A question in parliament is a request for information. The Attorney-General was asked five questions during Question Time.

A question on notice is a written question asked of a minister in a chamber or in estimates or committee hearings, which is answered in writing. Questions on notice are listed on the Notice Paper and remain listed until answered.

Question Time is a period of time in each house of parliament in which ministers are asked questions concerning their portfolio responsibilities by other members of parliament. Question Time is of special interest to members, visitors and the media.

A question without notice is a question asked orally of a minister where the minister usually has no warning of the content of the question. Questions without notice are asked during Question Time.

A quorum is the minimum number of people that have to be present to constitute a meeting as stated in the standing orders. The electronic bells rang to call members of the government to the chamber to form a quorum.

The reading of a bill is a principle stage which marks the passage of a bill through parliament. There are three readings in each house of the federal Parliament. The second reading of the bill signalled that a majority of the senators present in the chamber agreed with the bill in principle.

The recess refers to the short periods of time between sessions of parliament and the longer periods between meetings of a house. The winter recess will be six weeks long this year.

To recommit is to send a bill or part of a bill back to the committee of the whole stage so that it can be looked at again. Unexpected information caused the chamber to agree to recommit the bill.

A redistribution is a new division of an area into electorates with the result that the boundaries of some existing electorates are moved. The redistribution adjusted electoral boundaries to ensure roughly even numbers of voters in each electorate in each state.

A referendum is a vote by all voters on the electoral roll on a bill to change the Australian Constitution. The referendum of 1999 which asked whether or not Australia should become a republic was defeated.
regulation
A regulation is a law made under the authority of an Act of Parliament. Regulations made under the Public Service Act set the hours of duty for public servants.

repeal
To repeal is to revoke or withdraw formally or officially. When the new government came to power, the unpopular law was repealed.

report
1. A report is a statement, usually in writing, of the results of an inquiry. The information in the report supported the committee’s recommendation that the bill be rejected.
2. A report is a statement of progress in the consideration of legislation by the committee of the whole in the Senate. The report following consideration of the bill during committee of the whole confirmed to the President that the stage was complete.

representative
1. A representative is a person elected to a law-making body. The former teacher was elected as a federal representative in the Parliament of Australia.
2. A representative is a person who acts on behalf of others. The Governor-General is the representative of the Queen in Australia.

representative democracy
A representative democracy is a system of government in which the power is vested in the people, who exercise their power through elected representatives in parliament. In a representative democracy the people are provided with and utilize many different opportunities to influence outcomes.

reserve powers
Reserve powers are powers accorded the Governor-General by convention which are not written into the Constitution and which may be exercised without ministerial advice. In response to the hung parliament the Governor-General used his reserve powers to appoint the Prime Minister.

request
Making a request is how the Senate asks the House of Representatives to make an amendment to certain money bills which, under the Australian Constitution, the Senate cannot amend. The Senate put a request to the House, that certain clauses of the money bill be changed.

resignation
Resignation is the act of giving up a position. Wishing no longer to be a member of parliament, the minister submitted his resignation.

resolution
1. A resolution is a decision. The committee passed a resolution to meet four times a year.
2. A resolution is a formal expression of opinion by a legislative body or public meeting. The parliament passed a resolution supporting the newly-elected government of the neighbouring country.

responsibility
Having responsibility in a parliament is to undertake a duty for which a member of parliament or officer is accountable. The minister had responsibility for all trade matters.

responsible government
Responsible government is a system by which the government is answerable to the elected representatives of the people in the parliament for its actions. The term refers especially to a system where the government is formed from the parliamentary party or parties which has the support of the majority of the House of Representatives, and must maintain the confidence of a majority of that house to remain the government. The Leader of the Opposition cited the principle of responsible government and called on the Prime Minister to resign.

revenue
Revenue is the money a government collects from taxes and other sources. The Budget speech outlined the plan for expenditure of government revenue for the coming financial year.

rotation
Rotation is the term that applies to the constitutional provision that half of all state Senate seats will become vacant each three years. As state senators have a term of six years, this ensures continuity of Senate membership. Several new senators entered the Parliament following the Senate rotation.
royal assent
Royal assent is the signing of a bill by the Queen’s representative, who in the federal Parliament is the Governor-General. This is the last step in making a bill an Act of Parliament. The Governor-General granted royal assent to five bills which had recently passed the Parliament.

royal commission
A royal commission is an inquiry set up by a government to investigate and report on a matter of public concern. The government established a royal commission to investigate organised crime.

rule of law
Rule of law is the principle that all people are equal before the law, and that all executive government action is to be undertaken as written by the law. The rule of law prevented the officer from taking matters into his own hands.

ruling
A ruling is the formal decision made by the President or the Speaker, usually on a matter of parliamentary procedure in the Senate or the House of Representatives. The President issued a ruling that the senator was out of order.

run
To run in an election is to stand as a candidate at an election. The former athlete decided to run in the upcoming election.

Ss
schedule
A schedule is a list at the end of a bill or Act which contains matters of detail. The schedule to the Act concerned with land usage contains a map of the national park.

scrutinise
To scrutinise means to examine something closely. During Question Time, members and senators (the Legislature) question and scrutinise the actions of the Prime Minister and ministers (the Executive).

seat
A seat is an elected position in a house of parliament. There are 150 seats in the current House of Representatives and 76 seats in the current Senate.

second chamber
The second chamber is a name which is sometimes used to refer to an upper house such as the Senate. The Main Committee may also be referred to as the second chamber. The bill will move to the second chamber this afternoon.

second reading stage
The second reading stage is the second of three principal stages that a bill must go through in order to become an Act of Parliament. This is the stage in either house when debate on the principle or purpose of a bill takes place. The second reading stage was very long and included over 20 hours of debate.

section
A section is a separate numbered item in an Act of Parliament. A clause in a bill becomes a section in an Act. There were 65 sections in the Act.

select committee
A select committee is a group of parliamentarians from either house or both houses, appointed to inquire into and report on a particular subject. A select committee ceases to exist when it has made its final report to the house or houses. The select committee investigating driver fatigue disbanded after delivering its recommendations to the house.

Senate
The Senate is an elected legislative body which is one of the two federal houses of the Australian Parliament. The Senate is also known as the upper house, the states’ house and the house of review is one of the two federal houses of parliament. The current Senate has 76 senators; twelve representing each of the six Australian states and two representing both territories. The Senate is currently made up of 76 senators—12 representing each state and two representing each territory.

senator
A senator is a person who has been elected, or occasionally appointed to fill a vacancy in the Senate. The senator bowed before the President of the Senate.
Serjeant-at-Arms
The Serjeant-at-Arms is an officer of the House of Representatives who is responsible for keeping order in the House of Representatives chamber and within the Parliament House building. The Serjeant-at-Arms also provides services to members of the House of Representatives. The Serjeant-at-Arms carried the Mace and ushered the Speaker into the chamber.

session (of Parliament)
A session is a parliamentary period which starts on the first day of sitting after an election or prorogation and ends at a prorogation or a dissolution of the House of Representatives, or if neither has happened after three years. A session may last from one day to three years. The current session of the Parliament is the 41st session.

sessional order
A sessional order is a temporary rule governing the conduct of business in a house of parliament, which applies only for the session for which it is made. The Speaker of the House considered a sessional order to change the length of time permitted for delivering speeches.

shadow Cabinet
The shadow Cabinet is a group of members and senators from the main opposition party or parties in a parliament. The shadow Cabinet acts as spokespersons for the opposition on the principal areas of governance. The shadow Cabinet met to form a response to the latest government proposal.

shadow minister
A shadow minister is a member of the shadow ministry. Shadow ministers ‘shadow’ or look closely at what government ministers are doing. The shadow minister criticised the minister’s proposal and called for more effective action to be taken.

shadow ministry
The shadow ministry refers to the members of the opposition party or parties in a parliament who are party spokespersons in areas which usually match the areas of responsibility of ministers in the government. The shadow ministry discussed ways to publicise their policies during the election campaign.

shire
A shire is an area of local governance. Such areas may also be known as boroughs, municipalities and cities. The flood swept through the shire causing a lot of damage.

short title
The short title is the commonly known name of a bill. The short title of the bill was the Wildlife Welfare Bill 2003.

simple majority (see also absolute majority)
1. A simple majority is the number by which votes for the leading candidate exceed the votes for the next most popular candidate. The winning candidate received 8,500 votes and the next candidate 6,500 votes, so the winning candidate had a simple majority of 2000.
2. In parliament a simple majority is more than half of the total votes of the members of parliament present and voting. The bill was passed in the House of Representatives on a simple majority of members present in the chamber.

sitting
1. A sitting is a meeting of a house of parliament. The sitting day concluded with an Adjournment Debate.
2. A sitting is a period of meeting of a house of parliament. In the federal Parliament there are three annual sitting periods during which neither house adjourns for more than 20 days. They are the autumn sitting between February and April, the winter sitting between May and June and the spring sitting between August and December. The commencement of the new sitting period brought an increase in visitors to the parliament.

Speaker
The Speaker is the person who is elected by the members of the House of Representatives as its presiding officer to run the parliamentary proceedings in the House of Representatives. The Speaker made sure that all members obeyed the rules of the chamber.

standing committee
A standing committee is a group of members of parliament appointed by either house or both houses to inquire into and report on certain matters. A standing committee exists for the life of a parliament and is usually reappointed in succeeding parliaments. The standing committee on economics reconvened after the winter break.

standing orders
Standing orders are the permanent rules which govern the conduct of business in a house of parliament. The standing orders do not permit members to interrupt other members while they are speaking.
state
1. A state is any of the regions, each more or less independent in internal affairs, which together make up a federal union, such as any of the states of Australia. The state government implemented a law to improve hospital operations.
2. A state is a number of people living in a defined territory and organised under one government. A state is an organised political community. Australia is comprised of six states and two territories.

state government
A state government is an elected group of people who administer state law, deliver goods and services and make day to day decisions on behalf of the people of that state. The Victorian state government announced an increase in police numbers.

state parliament
A state parliament is an assembly of elected representatives that makes the laws for an Australian state. The state parliament passed a law increasing funding for the provision of emergency services.

state rights
State rights are the powers or entitlements of states in a federal system. State rights entitle states to follow their own constitutions to the extent that this does not contradict the Australian Constitution.

states’ house
The states’ house is a term often used to describe the Senate, meaning the elected house of parliament set up to maintain and protect the interest of the states and in which the states are equally represented. Each state in the states’ house is represented by 12 senators.

statute
A statute is a formal, written law of a country or state. Australian statutes are written and published by the Parliament and enacted by executive government. Typically, statutes command, prohibit, or declare something. The judge consulted the statute before making a decision on the case.

statutory authority
A statutory authority is a government agency established by an Act of Parliament, more or less independent of ministerial control, usually not bound by public service procedures to the same extent as government departments, and which is responsible finally to the Parliament. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) is a statutory authority.

submission
A submission to a parliamentary committee of inquiry contains suggestions or arguments made orally or in writing for consideration. When the witness appeared before the committee she referred to the evidence she had provided in her submission.

suffrage
Suffrage is the right given to citizens to vote at elections. The Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 gave suffrage to Australian women (with the exception of indigenous women in some states).

supply
Supply is the provision of the funds necessary for the government to function. The opposition tactic was to block supply in the Senate.

supply bill
A supply bill is a bill which, if passed by both houses of parliament, will allow the government to spend money related to governance for the first five months of the financial year, until the main appropriation bills for that year are passed. The supply bill included requirements for funding major improvements to the national railways.

suspend
To suspend a senator or member is to remove the individual from a house of parliament and so prevent his or her capacity to perform duties in, or be present in, the house for a time. This is usually a response to disorderly conduct. The member was suspended from the House of Representatives for 24 hours.

swinging voter
A swinging voter is a person who transfers his or her support, via their vote, from one political party to another at different elections. On the day of the election, the swinging voter had not decided how she would vote.
**Tt**

**table**
To table something in parliament is to present a document or article to a house of parliament. The senator was asked to table the report from the Senate committee.

**tax**
A tax is a financial charge or other levy imposed on an individual or a body. Taxes are usually collected by a government agency. The Treasurer announced tax cuts during the Budget speech.

**teller**
A teller is a person, usually a whip, who is appointed by a chair in both houses to count (or 'tell') the members voting in a division. The teller used a checklist of party names to count the 'no' votes.

**term**
A term is a limited period of time during which an office or a position is held. This is the senator’s second term in the Senate.

**terms of reference**
Terms of reference are the description or outline of a matter referred to a parliamentary committee for inquiry. There were four terms of reference that the Science and Innovation Committee was asked to investigate.

**territory**
In the federal system of government, a territory is an area which has not been given the full rights of a state. The home of the Australian federal Parliament is a territory; the Australian Capital Territory.

**territory government**
A territory government is an elected group of people who administer territory law, deliver goods and services and make day to day decisions on behalf of the people of that territory. The territory government decided to build a library in the new suburb.

**territory parliament**
A territory parliament is an assembly of elected representatives that make the laws for an Australian territory. The territory parliament debated the need for new road safety laws.

**third reading stage**
The third reading of a bill is the final of three fundamental stages that a bill must go through in order to become an Act of Parliament. This is the stage in either house when members or senators vote on the final version of the bill. At the completion of the third reading stage the bill moved to the Senate.

**Treasurer**
The Treasurer is the minister responsible for economic and financial policy, and who prepares the government’s Budget. The treasurer is the minister in charge of the government department known as the Treasury. The Treasurer suggested that tax increases might be included in the forthcoming Budget.

**treaty**
A treaty is a formal agreement between two or more independent nations concerning peace, alliance, trade or other international relations. Australia is a signatory to the ANZUS Treaty.

**Uu**

**unconstitutional**
To be unconstitutional is to be contrary to, or inconsistent with, a constitution or the recognised principles of the constitutional law of a country. The High Court ruled that the federal law was unconstitutional.

**unicameral**
A unicameral parliament consists of one chamber or house. Queensland has a unicameral parliament.

**unparliamentary language**
Unparliamentary language is the use of words or language which the chair of the house judges to be offensive or disorderly, and which are usually required to be withdrawn. The senator’s unparliamentary language drew howls of protest from the senators and a rebuke from the President.

**upper house**
The upper house is the second chamber in a bicameral parliament. The Senate is the upper house in the federal Parliament.
urgency motion
An urgency motion is moved in the Senate to provide an opportunity to discuss public policy and government performance and must be supported by five senators. The urgency motion proceeded without prior notice given the support of five senators.

Usher of the Black Rod
The Usher of the Black Rod is an officer of the Senate who is responsible for maintaining order in the Senate and who performs special duties on ceremonial occasions such as the opening of parliament after an election. The office of the Usher of the Black Rod also provides services and facilities to senators. The Usher of the Black Rod is named after the Black Rod that he or she carries.

Vv

vacancy
A vacancy is an unoccupied position or office. There was a vacancy in the position of party leader.

vice-regal
Vice-regal refers to a person appointed as a deputy by a king or queen. In Australia the Governor-General is the chief vice-regal representative of the Queen.

vote
1. A vote is a formal expression of a choice, such as putting one’s hand up or marking a piece of paper for counting purpose. Each voter marked their ballot paper to register their vote at the election.
2. A vote is the total number of votes. The party vote in the election was higher than usual.

voter
A voter is someone who votes or someone who has a right to vote. The first time voter was keen to take part in the democratic process.

Votes and Proceedings
Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives are the official records of decisions in the House of Representatives. The Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives recorded the results of the division.

Ww

Westminster
Westminster is the British Parliament, which meets at Westminster Palace in London. The Australian system of governance owes a lot to Westminster traditions.

Westminster system
The Westminster system is a system of government which originated in Britain, the main features of which are a head of state who is not the head of government and an executive government which is drawn from and is directly responsible to the parliament. The Australian system of government has several characteristics of the Westminster system.

whip
A whip is a party manager in parliament who is responsible for organising members of the party to take part in debates and votes, and who assists in arranging the business of a house of parliament. The whip asked the member to be present in the chamber for the debate.

witness
A witness is a person who gives evidence to a parliamentary committee. Three witnesses are to appear before the committee this afternoon.

writs
Writs are formal orders, issued by the Governor-General (in the case of the members of the House of Representatives and territory senators), and state governors (in the case of state senators), requiring that a federal election be held. The campaign began in earnest following the issuing of writs for a federal election next month.

Xx, Yy and Zz
There are no listings for X, Y or Z.