
SENATOR ANDREW MURRAY
AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACCOUNTABILITY SPOKESPERSON

**Senator Andrew Murray: Australian Democrats
Accountability Spokesperson
Senate Statistics 1 July 2005 – 30 June 2006
Issued : July 2006**

(1) Reduction of time for committees to consider bills.

Average deadline for reporting on bills:
1 January 2004 -30 June 2005: 39.04 days
1 July 2005 - 30 June 2006: 27.44 days

(2) Non-government amendments to bills (not including requests for amendments or items etc opposed)

Party	2003-04		2004-05 (election year)		2005-06	
	Agreed	Negatived	Agreed	Negatived	Agreed	Negatived
ALP	191	293	91	17	2	146
Democrats	116	366	23	120	1	356
Greens	7	61	0	37	0	71
ALP/AD	16	0	1	0	0	31
APA/AD	8	0	-	-	N/A	N/A
Other	118	1	5	5	0	32
Total non-government	456	721	120	179	3	636
Government	743	2	83	2	592	0

(3) Non government amendments agreed to by the Senate, plus requests, items etc successfully opposed in the Senate, and successful outcomes in the House of Representatives¹

	2003-04		2004-05 (election year)		2005-06	
	Agreed in Senate	Agreed in HR	Agreed in Senate	Agreed in HR	Agreed in Senate	Agreed in HR
Amendments	456	212 (6 lapsed)	120	28 (14 still unresolved)	3	3
Requests	12	3	3	0	0	0
Items, clauses etc opposed	147	125	0	0	1	(still unresolved)
Total	615	340	123	28	4	3

(4) Declarations of urgency (guillotines)

	2003-04	2004-05 (election year)	2005-06
Number of bills	0	4	21
Number of motions	0	1	5

(5) Orders for production of documents

	2003-04	2004-05 (election year)	2005-06
Number of orders proposed	33	25	11
Number of orders agreed to	33	25	1

¹ The decline in the number of Senate amendments accepted by the government in 2004-05 is probably due to the Government knowing after October 2004 that they would have a majority in a few months' time and could afford not to compromise.

(6) References to references committees – negatived 2003-04 to 2005-06

	2003-04	2004-05 (election year)	2005-06
References to references committees negatived	3	7	16

**SOME EXAMPLES OF COALITION MISUSE OF SENATE MAJORITY
1.7.05 —**

- (1) Unilateral alteration of the allocation of questions at question time.
- (2) Routine rejection of non-government amendments to bills, even where supported by government members of committees.
- (3) Blocking of references of some bills to committees, with no reasons given.
- (4) Reduction of time for committees to consider bills, with no reasons given.
- (5) Greater use of gag and guillotine to pass legislation, without consultation on allocation of times.
- (6) Reduction of the number of sitting days in the first half of 2006.
- (7) Rejection of most proposals for references to committees, often with no reasons given.
- (8) Rejection of motions for production of documents, often with no reasons given.
- (9) Rejection of requests by committees for information.
- (10) Direction that no officers would be allowed to answer any questions at estimates hearings about the AWB affair on matters before the Cole Commission.
- (11) Removal of “spill-over days” for estimates hearings in May 2006.
- (12) Increase in refusals to answer questions in estimates hearings.
- (13) Longer delays in providing answers to questions on notice.
- (14) Increasing number of claims that answering questions on notice would be too expensive.
- (15) Proposal to reduce numbers of committees and have them all chaired by Government Senators.