

WORD OF THE MONTH

OXFORD AUSTRALIA: THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH | NOVEMBER 2013

[Contact Us](#) - [Visit our website](#) - [ANDC](#) - [Send to friend](#) - [Subscribe](#) - [Privacy Policy](#)

Federation Chamber

- **noun:** a second debating chamber of the Australian House of Representatives; the committee that meets in this chamber.

THE STORY BEHIND THE WORD OF THE MONTH

In the first question time of 2013 in the Australian Parliament tributes were paid to Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, philanthropist, who died in December 2012. After words from the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the House, Anthony Albanese, announced that further tributes to Dame Elisabeth would be heard in the **Federation Chamber**.

Federation Chamber is one of the newest terms in the Australian lexicon. It is the name given to a second debating chamber of the Australian House of Representatives. All Members of the House of Representatives are also members of the **Federation Chamber**. It meets in a committee room linked to the House of Representatives, and it is where debates may be continued, bills may have their second reading and be scrutinised in detail, and committee reports may be discussed. The chamber is designed to ease the pressure of business in the House of Representatives and can meet at any time when the House is sitting, allowing different matters to be debated concurrently in the two chambers. Usually the matters sent to the **Federation Chamber** are those considered to be routine in nature, rather than the important business of the day. Thus the chamber has been called an offshoot of the House of Representatives, and less kindly described as 'the B field of the parliament' (*Australian*, 19 June 2012).

The chamber is not as new as its name; it was previously known as the Main Committee. A change of name was recommended in 2004 to avoid confusion with other parliamentary committees. It was suggested that the alternative name should not be party political, and that the name should reflect a significant aspect of Australian culture or parliamentary democracy. **Federation Chamber** was chosen but was not adopted until February 2012 when the new Speaker of the House, Peter Slipper, announced it:

Mr Slipper opened proceedings in Parliament by writing himself into a little corner of history. No longer would the third debating chamber (after the House and the Senate) be the pedestrian Main Committee. It would, he declared, be renamed a grander thing: the **Federation Chamber**. (*Melbourne Age*, 8 February 2012)

The term by extension can also refer to the assembled committee that meets in the chamber:

Mr Turnbull told the **Federation Chamber** in Canberra yesterday that if a conscience vote were allowed on marriage equality, he would have voted for it. (Lismore *Northern Star*, 11 September 2012)

Federation Chamber is being considered for inclusion in the second edition of the *Australian National Dictionary*.



You are receiving this email because you are a valued customer of Oxford University Press. If you wish to unsubscribe from future mailings, please click the unsubscribe link below.

[Unsubscribe](#)

