

# Attorney-General's Department

Office of Parliamentary Counsel

[www.legislation.sa.gov.au](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au)

## Search tips

20 October 2006



**Government  
of South Australia**

Attorney-General's  
Department

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### Disclaimer

Considerable time and effort has been devoted to compiling the information on the website as accurately as possible. Given the amount of detailed information involved it is not possible to guarantee complete accuracy and no liability is accepted for any inaccuracy. If you find an error, it would be appreciated if you would advise the Commissioner for Legislation Revision and Publication by email: [salegweb@agd.sa.gov.au](mailto:salegweb@agd.sa.gov.au).

## 1—Starting a search: search options

South Australian legislation may be searched using a standard or advanced search. The standard search box appears on the left side of every page. The advanced search may be accessed from the advanced link below the standard search box. This allows the scope of the search to be refined.

Both search types use Microsoft Index Server.

## 2—Search limitations

It is important to understand the following limitations:

- only legislation the text of which is contained in the A-Z databases of consolidated legislation is available to be searched
- only certain historical versions of consolidated legislation are available to be searched
- only legislation as made from 1 January 2003 the text of which is contained in the as made databases is available to be searched
- only Bills of the 4th session of the 50th Parliament and subsequent sessions and Parliaments are available to be searched.

Additional legislative index information is provided in the A-Z lists and on the home page of Acts and subordinate legislation—the text of the legislation to which the information relates is not available on the website and cannot be searched.

See *About this website* (available at [www.legislation.sa.gov.au](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au)) for further details.

## 3—Standard search

The standard search searches the text of all legislation maintained by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (current and historical versions, as made versions and Bills) in both PDF and RTF format.

By clicking on the file info column heading on the search results page, the search results will be sorted by format (removing the appearance of double entries for each search result).

## 4—Advanced search—refining the scope of a search

### 4.1 Introduction

The advanced search box allows the scope of a search to be refined for 3 different groups: category, version and format.

## 4.2 Categories

The category group lists the type of legislation maintained by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and available on the website. The checkboxes in this group can be used to restrict a search to particular types of legislation.

The categories are:

- Acts—limits the search to Acts enacted by the Parliament of South Australia, the text of which is contained in the A-Z consolidations database or the as enacted since 1 January 2003 database
- Regulations and rules—limits the search to regulations and rules made by the Governor, the text of which is contained in the A-Z consolidations database or the as enacted since 1 January 2003 database
- Policies—limits the search to aquaculture policies and environment protection policies, the text of which is contained in the A-Z consolidations database or the as enacted database (ie excluding aquaculture policies made before 1 November 2005 and national environment protection measures that became environment protection policies under section 28 of the *Environment Protection Act 1993* before its repeal)
- Proclamations and notices—limits the search to proclamations and notices made by the Governor since 1 January 2003 in consolidated form (there are very few of these) and as made since 1 January 2003.
- Bills—limits the search to Bills before the current session of Parliament and Bills archived since the 4th session of the 50th Parliament (2005).

## 4.3 Versions

The version group contains 3 options: current, historical and as made.

- Current—
  - for Acts and subordinate legislation—limits the search to the latest in force or uncommenced version of principal legislation, the text of which is contained in the A-Z consolidations databases
  - for Bills—limits the search to Bills of the current session of Parliament
- Historical—
  - for Acts and subordinate legislation—limits the search to the historical versions of principal legislation, the text of which is contained in the A-Z consolidations databases
  - for Bills—limits the search to archived Bills (2005+) ie Bills that are not of the current session of Parliament

- As made—
  - for Acts and subordinate legislation—limits the search to versions of legislation as enacted or made since 1 January 2003
  - for Bills—This option has no relevance to a search of Bills.

## 4.4 Formats

Legislation on the website is available in PDF (portable document format) and RTF (rich text format). Sometimes the RTF is large, so a zipped file (compressed to reduce file size) is also made available. Zipped files cannot be searched.

Some historical versions are available only in PDF and, hence, a search of PDF formats is recommended for historical versions.

If both formats are searched, clicking on the file info column heading on the search results page will sort the results by format (removing the appearance of double entries for each search result).

## 5—Constructing a search

### 5.1 Search words

Key points to consider:

- Case is not significant when entering a search. So Parliament and parliament will produce the same results.
- By default consecutive words are treated as part of a phrase (ie the application surrounds them by double quotes).
- Punctuation marks such as a full stop (.), comma (,), colon (:) or semicolon (;) and hyphens (-) are ignored when searching.
- Phrases containing the following characters must be surrounded by double quotes: &, |, ^, #, @, \$, (, ). For example, for AT&T, use "AT&T".
- Common words such as "a", "an", "is", "other", "than" etc. are not indexed so don't use them as search words. A search cannot consist solely of common words. For example, a search for "other than" will not work and an error message is displayed.

Common words:

about	after	all	also	an
and	another	any	are	as
at	be	because	been	before
being	between	both	but	by
came	can	come	could	did
do	does	each	else	for
from	get	got	has	had
he	have	her	here	him
himself	his	how	if	in

into	is	it	its	just
like	make	many	me	might
more	most	much	must	my
never	no	now	of	on
only	or	other	our	out
over	re	said	same	see
since	should	so	some	still
such	take	than	that	the
their	them	then	there	these
they	this	those	through	to
too	under	up	use	very
want	was	way	we	well

Numbers and the letters of the alphabet are also treated as common words.

- The words "and", "near", "or" and "not" are search operators (see table) and will not match words unless they are part of a quoted phrase.
- Common words used in searches will match any word in their place. For example, to search "chose in action" put "chose in action" in the search box. The result list will bring up "chose in action" but also "chose the action", "chose an action" etc. This is because the word "in" is not itself searched but is needed to bring up the whole phrase "chose in action".
- Searches may be refined by using search operators and by using wildcards.

## 5.2 Search operators

If you want to find documents with:

What	Operator	Example
More than 1 word or phrase For example, all documents containing both "tax" and "scheme".	and (&)	tax and scheme tax & scheme
1 word or phrase and/or another word or phrase For example, all documents containing the word "tax" or the word "scheme". This will also match documents that contain both "tax" and "scheme".	or ( )	tax or scheme tax   scheme
1 word or phrase without another word or phrase For example, all documents containing the word "tax" but do not contain the word "scheme". The not operator may only be used after an and operator.	and not (& !)	tax and not scheme tax & ! scheme
Words near each other For example, all documents containing the word "tax" near the word "scheme" and rank them according to	near (~)	tax near scheme tax ~ scheme

their proximity.		
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Other facts:

- The near and and operators match the same documents. The difference is that when the near operator is used, the documents are given a rank according to the proximity of the search words in the document. The closer the words are to each other, the closer the document appears to the top of the result list.
- Parentheses may be used to group search words. For example:
  - (word1 or word2) and word3 which is equivalent to (word1 and word3) or (word2 and word3).
  - (word1 or word2) and not word3 which is equivalent to (word1 and not word3) or (word2 and not word3).

### 5.3 Using wildcards

If you are not certain of the exact word or phrase you wish to find, use wildcards to broaden the search.

If you know the prefix of a word, use the prefix only and put a single asterisk (\*) after the prefix. For example, searching for *tax\** will match *taxi*, *taxable*, *taxation* etc.

If you know the word you are looking for but are not sure about the form or forms in which it is used, a *stem word wildcard* may help. Use 2 asterisks (\*\*) after the word to tell the search engine to match all similar words. For example, searching for *fly\*\** will match *fly*, *flying*, *flown*, *flew* etc.

Wildcards can only be used on words at the end of a phrase. They may not, for instance, be added to the second word in a three-word phrase. eg *wholesale sale\* tax*.

## 6—Search results

Matched documents are listed in order of significance, with more significant documents appearing earlier in the result list. Significance is based on the closeness of the match, not the legal importance of a document.

The search results may be sorted by short title, version type, year of title, file info or rank by clicking on the relevant column heading. If the column heading is clicked a second time, the results will be sorted again in reverse order.

If both PDF and RTF documents are searched (as in the standard search), sorting by file info is an easy method for removing the appearance of double entries for each search result (ie 1 entry for the PDF format and 1 entry for the RTF format).

If a search is limited to either PDF or RTF, the other format can be readily accessed through the link to the home page for the particular legislation.

If all version categories are searched (as in the standard search), sorting by category is an easy method for focussing on a particular category, for example, just the current versions of legislation.

If a search is limited to the as made database, sorting by year of title is an easy method for locating recent material (for example, a recent example of a particular type of provision).

Unlike some other search engines, search words are not highlighted in matched documents. A matched document must be opened and a search conducted within that document. The common shortcut of holding down the Ctrl key and pressing “f” may be able to be used to commence the search. The search is limited to that accommodated by the application used to open the document.