

## The Conventions' Spelling Conventions

### Regional Variation in Nineteenth Century Australian Spelling

#### Conclusions

This study has found evidence of regional spelling standards never before investigated or even surmised. The monolithic character of AusE has, once again, been successfully challenged.

It was shown that each colonial parliament had spelling policies and that these were strictly followed. The level of consistency achieved is truly astounding and surely would do honour to any parliament's staff today. Surprisingly the editorial decisions taken differed from state to state, e.g. with <our>/<or> and <ise>/<ize>, and are sometimes the opposite of the majority choices within that colony, e.g. <ise> in Victoria and <or> in South Australia.

Although there is no direct proof, it is very likely that there were style manuals for the Hansard staffs of the three colonial parliaments. These were used to achieve consistency in spelling and punctuation in the reports. However, not all parliaments chose to regulate all matters of divided usage. Some allowed for variability, e.g. *ensure/insure* in South Australia and New South Wales, leaving the ultimate choice to the individual scribe.

It would be intriguing to unearth these manuals which divided AusE at the point when the Australian colonies had decided to form an inseparable union.