

TABLED PAPER

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DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE	
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Clerk of the Senate	

Joint Committee on Publications

**THE
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
PUBLISHING SERVICE AND ITS
ROLE IN COMMONWEALTH
PRINTING AND PUBLISHING 1964-1978**

(SIXTH SPECIAL REPORT)

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING SERVICE
CANBERRA 1978-0

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

Standing Order 36 of the Senate reads, in part:

36.—(1.) A Publications Committee, to consist of seven Senators, shall be appointed at the commencement of each Parliament, with power to confer or sit as a Joint Committee with a similar Committee of the House of Representatives.

* * * * *

(3.) When conferring with a similar Committee of the House of Representatives, the Committee shall also have power:

- (a) to inquire into and report on the printing, publication and distribution of Parliamentary and Government Publications and on such matters as are referred to it by the relevant Minister, and
- (b) to send for persons, papers and records.

Standing Order 28 of the House of Representatives reads, in part:

28. A Publications Committee, to consist of seven Members, shall be appointed at the commencement of each Parliament with power to confer with a similar committee of the Senate In addition, when conferring with a similar committee of the Senate, the Committee shall have power—

- (a) to inquire into and report on the printing, publication and distribution of Parliamentary and Government Publications and on such matters as are referred to it by the relevant Minister, and
- (b) to send for persons, papers and records.

Previous Reports of Committee:

- Report relating to the distribution and pricing of Parliamentary Publications
Parl. Paper 153/1971
- Report relating to departmental publishing activities
Parl. Paper 285/1972
- Report relating to the Pink Pages advertising contract for the Victorian telephone directories
Parl. Paper 175/1972
- Inquiry into the purpose, scope and distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series
Parl. Paper 216/1977
- Inquiry into the publication of Commonwealth Acts, Statutory Rules and Legislation of the Territories
Parl. Paper 25/1978

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

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Canberra, A.C.T. 2600

(1) Term of service as Senator expired, 30 June 1978, service on Committee thereupon ceased at that date.
(2) Service on Committee ceased, with the dissolution of the House of Representatives on 10 November 1977.
(3) Appointed, 1 March 1978.
(4) Discharged from attendance on Committee, 17 August 1978.
(5) Appointed, 17 August 1978.

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CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

The Committee has considered the transcript of evidence and the submissions which have been placed before it. From this material, the Committee draws the following principal conclusions:

The Role of AGPS in Commonwealth publishing

C.1 That the Erwin Committee concept of a central Government Publishing Office as reflected in the establishment of the AGPS is basically sound and has led to vast improvement in the standard of Commonwealth publications and their availability to the public. (Paras 2.1, 4.5)

C.2 That AGPS guidelines covering production standards for Commonwealth publications have an unquestioned value in achieving a uniformity of design and style in a majority of these publications. (Para 4.6 (a) ii)

C.3 That the advantages of a central print procurement body are considerable, and should achieve an overall savings in departmental staffing expenses due to the development of uniform procedures and administrative expertise. (Para 4.6 (b))

C.4 That great achievements have been made by the AGPS in effecting a more efficient distribution of Commonwealth publications and, in so doing, has contributed significantly to the basic aims of dissemination of information, open government and freedom of information. (Para 4.6 (c))

C.5 That AGPS achievements have not been made without monetary cost and at the expense of the service element which was envisaged for the AGPS when first established. (Para 4.7)

The Position of AGPS in the Public Service

C.6 That with the continued pressure of staff ceilings AGPS must concede functions to other departments or its central department, and accordingly there is a danger of AGPS functions becoming decentralised to the extent that the original concept of the Erwin Committee may be seriously undermined. (Para 5.3)

C.7 That the AGPS has been subject to extensive administrative structural variations since its establishment. To enable the AGPS to perform satisfactorily, only carefully planned structural variations should be undertaken and hasty and *ad hoc* structural variation should be avoided in the future. (Paras 5.4, 5.5)

C.8 That for administrative reasons, the present location of AGPS within the Department of Administrative Services does not allow it appropriate flexibility to react to changing circumstances in printing and publishing requirements. (Para 5.7)

C.9 That while many AGPS procedures appear to be too bureaucratic and seem to involve the employment of more staff than necessary, to further reduce staff numbers will adversely affect AGPS services. (Para 5.8)

C.10 That the operations of the AGPS should be more consistent with commercial practices to establish AGPS as a self-supporting entity. (Para 5.10)

Government Printing Office

C.11 That in certain areas of Government Printing Office operations there are elements of inefficiency which are of concern to clients and to the Government Printer. (Para 6.4)

C.12 That it is essential for the Government Printer to have direct and total control over all administrative matters associated with the operation of the Government Printing Office. (Paras 6.5, 6.6, 6.9)

C.13 That it is desirable for the responsibilities of the Government Printer to be clearly established and that appropriate resources be made available to him to enable these responsibilities to be carried out effectively and efficiently. (Para 6.9)

C.14 That, in recent years, significant losses have been sustained by the Government Printing Office due to a 'no work' situation which arises from an inadequate and uneconomic deployment of labour and equipment. (Paras 7.1 to 7.4)

C.15 That the steps taken to avoid the possible re-occurrence of similar losses in the future have been inadequate. (Paras 7.4 to 7.13)

C.16 That the rates currently charged by the Government Printing Office for its work are higher than those of most commercial printers. (Para 7.10)

C.17 That the work allocation policy of one-third of the value of total government printing to the Government Printer and two-thirds to the private sector of the printing industry serves no useful purpose, particularly when the set proportions are most difficult to adhere to. (Para 7.18)

C.18 That the Government Printer has little control over the input of the work he receives, either its extent or timing. (Para 7.19)

Print Procurement

C.19 That the advantages of a central authority which has a responsibility to arrange the printing of departmental publishing programs are considerable. (Para 7.23)

C.20 That, due to a lack of staffing resources, the responsibility for procuring a large portion of general printing items has been decentralised back to departments. (Para 7.24)

C.21 That to maintain appropriate publishing standards, the AGPS must have control of the manuscript from initial receipt until final copies are distributed to the user. (Para 7.27)

C.22 That, in the field of general printing, print procurement responsibility could be most effectively handled by the Government Printer. (Para 7.28)

C.23 That the procedures by which print procurement is arranged are complicated, tedious and in some cases, unnecessary. (Para 7.31)

Government Printer Trust Account

C.24 That the cost of meeting responsibilities which are given to the Government Printer because of his particular expertise and which do not have a direct bearing on his stated responsibilities should not be charged against the Government Printer Trust Account, but that a subsidy should be provided to cover such extraneous costs. (Para 8.9)

Senior Management of the Government Printing Office

C.25 That the remuneration paid to the Government Printer in relation to his responsibilities is a matter of serious concern to the Committee. (Paras 8.11, 8.12)

C.26 That the creation of a position of Deputy Government Printer is desirable. (Para 8.13)

C.27 That the lack of an adequate senior structure of officers in the Government Printing Office is a matter of concern. (Para 8.13)

In-house Printing

C.28 That there is a significant economic disadvantage in allowing in-house printing units to be operated and expanded in the present manner. (Para 9.3)

The Government Publisher

C.29 That AGPS has carried out its operations with an excessive attraction to bureaucratic procedures, thereby generating complaints from client departments concerning a lack of flexibility and detracting from its service role. (Para 10.5)

C.30 That AGPS has too readily taken on new tasks given to it by government without becoming proficient in its original responsibilities. (Para 10.7)

C.31 That many of the difficulties being experienced by the AGPS are caused by a lack of clear understanding by it and its client departments as to what are each other's responsibilities. (Para 10.10)

AGPS Client Service and Print Procurement

C.32 That there is little attempt by the AGPS to engage in public relations exercises with its client departments. (Para 11.5)

Payment of Accounts

C.33 That present procedures for the payment of departmental accounts for printing services provided by the Government Printer or commercial printers cause undue delay and require rationalisation. (Para 11.15)

AGPS Publishing Standards and Design

C.34 That the Publishing Standards and Design section of the AGPS has placed the AGPS at the forefront of Commonwealth publishing. (Para 12.2)

C.35 That the centralising of responsibility for departmental design requirements within AGPS will achieve greater efficiency and overall reductions in staff numbers in the Public Service. (Para 12.8)

C.36 That responsibility for the inclusion of libellous or defamatory material in departmental publications should be returned to author departments. (Para 12.10)

AGPS Sales and Distribution

C.37 That the centralising of responsibility for the distribution of departmental publications can lead to savings in overall departmental resources. (Paras 13.5, 13.48)

C.38 That the adoption of normal commercial business practices would improve the operation of AGPS Bookshops. (Para 13.7)

C.39 That with the achievement of self-government in the Northern Territory, there is an urgent need for the establishment of adequate AGPS sales facilities at Darwin. (Para 13.10)

C.40 That at this stage in the development of AGPS the establishment of regional Bookshops cannot be justified. (Para 13.11)

C.41 That the lack of appropriate staff numbers and an inadequate career structure, together with insufficient staff training sessions and poor liaison from the central office, have contributed to a low morale situation at AGPS Bookshops. (Paras 13.19 to 13.21)

C.42 That there is an urgent need for a mail order service to be operated from AGPS Bookshops for Members of Parliament and account customers. (Para 13.22)

C.43 That joint sharing arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States in relation to Bookshop operations are desirable. (Para 13.24)

C.44 That present delays in meeting AGPS mail order requests are inappropriate for a government service. (Para 13.27)

C.45 That there is a need for the establishment of more retail sales agencies for government publications. (Paras 13.31 to 13.33)

C.46 That the existence of departmental sales outlets can often create a situation of departmental competition with the AGPS and may involve unnecessary duplication of functions. (Para 13.39)

C.47 That an attempt to recoup author costs of publications through increased prices in most instances would make government publications prohibitively expensive to their intended users. (Para 13.42)

C.48 That the author department rather than AGPS should be able to determine the rate of price subsidy for its publications. (Para 13.44)

C.49 That insufficient work currently is directed through the AGPS distribution section to achieve economic utilisation of resources. (Para 13.51)

C.50 That AGPS intervention in the area of free distribution of departmental publications is resented by author departments. (Para 13.56)

C.51 That the excessive official and free issue of government publications, being costly, must be avoided, wherever possible. (Paras 13.55, 13.56)

C.52 That there remains a need for a service to enable the public to know how and where to obtain government services and information on government policy. (Para 13.65)

C.53 That marketing assessments designed to determine appropriate quantities for AGPS sales are too frequently based on inadequate information. (Para 13.68)

C.54 That the advertising of its publications undertaken commercially by the AGPS is deficient, in both method and extent. (Paras 13.73, 13.74)

C.55 That there is a need for the preparation of specialist publication lists of topical reports for professional journals. (Para 13.75)

Management Services

C.56 That it is necessary to re-establish a management services branch under the direct control of the AGPS. (Para 14.2)

C.57 That there is a need for the appointment of a commercial publishing expert to the senior management position in AGPS for a contracted, temporary period. (Paras 14.3, 14.4)

A Charter of Responsibilities

C.58 That many of the problems which have been experienced by the AGPS and its client departments are due to the lack of clear areas of responsibilities for Commonwealth publishing agencies. (Para 16.1)

A Board of Review

C.59 That a need exists for the establishment of a Board of Review to overview the operations of the various government publishing agents and their respective responsibilities and to adjudicate on areas of conflict. (Paras 17.1, 17.2)

Other Matters

Bibliographical Control

C.60 That insufficient attention is paid by author departments to the need to maintain adequate bibliographical control. (Paras 19.1 to 19.3)

C.61 That there is repeated failure on the part of departments and statutory authorities to lodge copies of all relevant publications with the National Library in the required manner. (Para 19.6)

C.62 That the provisions for the international exchange of publications between Australia and overseas countries are inadequate and in need of revision. (Para 19.9)

Copyright

C.63 That the recommendations of the Erwin Committee in relation to copyright of government publications have yet to be acted upon to the satisfaction of the Committee. (Para 20.3)

Information Retrieval

C.64 That there is an urgent need for the utilisation of computer services in the collection, storage and retrieval of information for Members of Parliament. (Para 21.1)

Joint Committee

C.65 That there is a need to amend the Standing Orders relating to the Joint Committee on Publications to provide it with powers more in keeping with its expanding role in the field of overseeing Parliamentary and government publishing. (Paras 22.1 and 22.2)

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the principal conclusions reached by the Committee and the evidence received, the following recommendations are made:

Government Printing Office *Government Printer*

R.1 That at the commencement of each Session of Parliament, a Resolution be agreed to by both Houses of Parliament similar to the following:

That the Government Printer be responsible to the Presiding Officers for the printing of all Parliamentary publications and be provided with the necessary resources to meet Parliamentary printing requirements.

That, at all times, the Government Printer give priority to Parliamentary work. (Para 6.10)

R.2 That the Government Printer carry out such confidential and urgent work of the government as may be determined from time to time. (Para 6.10)

R.3 That the Government Printing Office be made operationally independent of the AGPS and all administrative support necessary for its operation be placed within the responsibility of the Government Printer. (Para 6.10)

R.4 That the Government Printer be administratively responsible to the Secretary of the Department administered by the responsible Minister. (Para 6.10)

Rates of charge and purchase of equipment

R.5 That all factors involved in calculating the rates of charge used by the Government Printer be reviewed after taking into consideration the practices followed by State Government Printers, commercial printers and Government Printers of comparable overseas countries with a view to ensuring that a 'user pays' principle is instituted. (Para 7.14)

R.6 That the policy of allocating a fixed proportion of printing and publishing work to the public and private sectors be discontinued. (Para 7.19)

R.7 That a review of Government Printing Office plant capacity and equipment be undertaken to ensure that capital equipment employed by the Government Printer is not excessive and is basically directed towards meeting the printing requirements of Parliament and the urgent and confidential printing needs of the government. (Para 7.34)

R.8 That the equipment employed in the Government Printing Office be examined to ensure that it is the most efficient and economic equipment available to fulfil its intended purpose. (Para 7.34)

R.9 That, before the Government Printing Office undertakes any significant expansion of its printing plant, approval be obtained from the responsible Minister after consultation with the Board of Review. (Para 7.34)

R.10 That the Government Printing Office, wherever possible, operate its plant and associated personnel in such a way as to achieve the most effective utilisation of these resources. (Para 7.35)

Print Procurement

R.11 That responsibility for print procurement of general printing needs of departments estimated to cost more than \$500 become the responsibility of the Government

Printer (responsibility for arranging the printing of items estimated to cost less than \$500 to remain with the originating department). (Para 7.28)

R.12 That officers from the Publishing Branch, AGPS, the Government Printing Office, and the Department of Finance review the procedures by which procurement of government printing is achieved, including the possibility of reducing the time taken to allocate printing contracts: such review should include consultations with the Auditor-General and give consideration to the practices of the States and comparable overseas countries. (Para 7.31)

Payment of Accounts

R.13 That, where a department lodges a general printing job with the Government Printer to arrange printing, and which job is subsequently completed by a commercial printer, the account be settled direct to the commercial printer from the Government Printer's Trust Account and that the Government Printer subsequently recoup that amount, together with any handling charge considered appropriate, from the author department. (Para 8.5)

R.14 That the Department of Finance determine an appropriate handling charge for print procurement services provided by the Government Printer. (Para 8.6)

Senior Management

R.15 That the remuneration paid to the Government Printer in relation to his responsibilities be reviewed as a matter of urgency. (Para 8.11)

R.16 That urgent consideration be given to the creation of the position of Deputy Government Printer. (Para 8.13)

Control over purchase of in-house printing equipment

R.17 That the Government Printer prepare guidelines:

- (a) to cover the type of work which should be undertaken by departmental in-house printing facilities;
- (b) along the lines suggested in paragraph 9.8 of this Report; and
- (c) submit them to the Board of Review and to the responsible Minister for their respective approvals. (Para 9.9)

R.18 That departmental submissions requesting the purchase of in-house printing equipment be examined by the Government Printer prior to their consideration by the Australian Government Stores and Tender Board to ensure that such requests are consistent with the in-house printing equipment guidelines; and that within any such examination the Government Printer ensure that existing departmental facilities are in accordance with the in-house printing equipment guidelines. (Para 9.9)

R.19 That, wherever statutory provisions permit, prior to purchase of printing equipment, statutory authorities consult with the Government Printer to determine appropriate equipment which would meet their printing requirements. (Para 9.9)

R.20 That, in the event of the Government Printer and a department or statutory authority failing to reach agreement on in-house printing requirements, the matter be forwarded to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action. (Para 9.9)

R.21 That consideration be given to assigning the responsibility for the Department of Defence printing establishments at Brunswick and Bendigo in Victoria to the Government Printer. (Para 9.9)

Australian Government Publishing Service

Controller

R.22 That the position of Controller (AGPS) be re-established and be directly responsible to the Secretary of the Department which is under the administrative control of the responsible Minister. (Para 5.5)

Print Procurement

R.23 That the procedures by which printing is procured be reviewed to reduce the time taken to allocate printing contracts. (Para 11.10)

R.24 That AGPS consult with the client department in relation to the print procurement process prior to the selection of a printer, and where practicable permit direct contact between the client department and that printer, but that AGPS retain final authority in these matters. (Para 11.10)

R.25 That on appropriate occasions, as determined by the Board of Review, departments may arrange print procurement of their publications. (Para 11.12)

Circulars

R.26 That the AGPS prepare circulars which contain instructions appropriate to the standards and procedures necessary to undertake the publication of Commonwealth publications and that such circulars and alterations thereto be submitted to the Committee for its consideration. (Para 12.9)

R.27 That a consolidation of AGPS circulars be undertaken in a style similar to the Treasury Manual, and that, when amendments are made to a circular, these be forwarded to departments and appropriate statutory authorities in the form of replacement or additional sheets. (Para 11.14)

R.28 That the AGPS advise departments and, where appropriate, statutory authorities of the requirement to adhere to AGPS circulars. (Para 11.13)

R.29 That significant or consistent departures from AGPS circulars by departments and, where relevant, statutory authorities be referred by the AGPS to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action. (Para 11.13)

R.30 That in the event of a disagreement between the AGPS and a client department over the application of AGPS circulars, the view of the department shall prevail, but the AGPS shall refer the matter to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action. (Para 11.13)

Publications Trust Account

R.31 That when accounts for printing services are received by the AGPS from a contract printer, these be met directly from the Publications Trust Account. (Para 11.16)

R.32 That the AGPS recover contract printers' charges from the client department, together with any charges considered appropriate for arranging print procurement, design and other AGPS services. (Para 11.16)

R.33 That the Department of Finance determine appropriate handling charges for print procurement, design and other services provided by AGPS to its clients. (Para 11.16)

Design

R.34 That design responsibilities for departmental publishing programs be transferred progressively from departments to the AGPS. (Para 12.7)

R.35 That following receipt of departmental requests for additional design staff and prior to the consideration of such requests, the Public Service Board consult with the Board of Review. (Para 12.8)

R.36 That the Board of Review progressively review departmental design requirements to ensure that, wherever possible, the responsibility for these functions are transferred to the AGPS. (Para 12.8)

Author Responsibility

R.37 That the decision to print a publication and its content, including the possibility of a publication containing libellous or defamatory material, be the responsibility of the author department. (Para 12.10)

Bookshops

R.38 That either the AGPS Bookshop be re-established in Darwin or one of the recommendations relating to paragraph 13.24 be implemented, namely a joint selling facility or the establishment of an agency. (Para 13.10)

R.39 That the method of calculating Bookshop notional profit and loss accounts and items appearing in the Publications Trust Account be reviewed by the AGPS and the Department of Finance with a view to making their accounting procedures more in line with commercial practice and thereby reflecting a more accurate picture of AGPS financial operations. (Para 13.16)

R.40 That the Department of Finance and the AGPS, in consultation with the Auditor-General's Office, examine Finance Directions governing the operation of AGPS Bookshops with a view to introducing procedures more in keeping with the operations of a commercial outlet. (Para 13.25)

R.41 That a small pool of officers be established within AGPS which can be drawn upon, when necessary, to alleviate staff shortages in Bookshops. (Para 13.20)

R.42 That a mail order service for Members of Parliament be introduced and operated by AGPS Bookshops, excluding Canberra. (Para 13.22)

R.43 That urgent consideration be given to the feasibility of introducing a mail order service for account customers, operated locally by the staff of AGPS Bookshops. (Para 13.22)

R.44 That negotiations directed towards establishing shared Bookshop facilities between the States and the Commonwealth be undertaken where it is considered that such arrangements would be economically and administratively viable. (Para 13.24)

R.45 That where it is not possible for the AGPS to combine its selling facilities with those of the relevant State bookshops, future decisions on re-location of bookshops should take into account the possibility of establishing Commonwealth and State selling facilities within the same building, or within close proximity to one another. (Para 13.24)

Mail Order Sales

R.46 That a task force of officers be formed to reduce to approximately ten working days:

- (a) the backlog in mail order requests; and
- (b) the present backlog of correspondence in the mail order section. (Para 13.28)

R.47 That the Public Service Board investigate AGPS procedures (taking cognisance of recent reviews which have been made in this area) with a view to recommending an adequate staffing structure to fulfil a ten working day turnaround for mail order sales. (Para 13.28)

R.48 That consultations take place between the AGPS, the Department of Finance and, where appropriate, the Auditor-General's Office, to vary Finance Directions to place mail order sales on a basis more in keeping with a commercial operation, wherever possible. (Para 13.28)

Sales through other outlets

R.49 That the AGPS devote greater attention to increasing wholesale sales to retail outlets, in particular by:

- (a) the increase of stocks held by existing agents;
- (b) investigating the possibility of increasing the number of its commercial selling agents and taking whatever action is necessary to effect further expansion in this area;
- (c) investigating the possibility of establishing shared selling facilities with commercial bookstores, and taking whatever action is thought necessary to effect the establishment of such facilities; and
- (d) the employment of sales representatives to support AGPS sales outlets. (Para 13.34)

R.50 That, wherever possible, the AGPS follow commercial practices when undertaking wholesale selling activities. (Para 13.36)

R.51 That departments which carry out sales of their departmental publications to the public be authorised by the Board of Review, wherever appropriate, to act as a selling agent of the AGPS. (Para 13.39)

R.52 That where the Board of Review considers that the retail activities of a department are inappropriate and could be more effectively and economically carried out by the AGPS, the Board of Review shall recommend to the responsible Minister and the Minister concerned that the responsibility for such activities should be transferred to the AGPS. (Para 13.39)

R.53 That departmental selling agents provide the AGPS with all necessary bibliographical information on their publications, including whether they are available for free issue or sale. (Para 13.39)

Pricing Policy

R.54 That the AGPS draw up guidelines, to be approved by the Board of Review and the responsible Minister, for the setting of prices for internally produced departmental publications, and the basis upon which free issue of such publications should take place. (Para 13.40)

R.55 That retail prices for AGPS publications be set at a rate which will recover all costs associated with the selling function. (Para 13.43)

R.56 That, while recognising that the price of publications should be kept within reasonable limits to enable wide availability and circulation of documents, the AGPS be permitted to vary its pricing formula after agreement is reached with the Board of Review. (Para 13.43)

R.57 That departments be permitted to subsidise the selling price of a publication from their departmental appropriations. (Para 13.44)

R.58 That the AGPS draw up guidelines governing the application of selling price subsidies for departmental publications and that such guidelines be submitted to the Board of Review for its consideration and approval. (Para 13.44)

R.59 That if departments wish to subsidise the selling price of a publication by more than 20 per cent of the AGPS retail price, agreement must be obtained from the

Board of Review; provided that if insufficient time is available for the Board of Review to consider the departmental request, the department be permitted to subsidise the publication to an extent deemed necessary. (Para 13.44)

R.60 That wherever a department subsidises a publication, the instance shall be reported by the AGPS to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action. (Para 13.44)

R.61 That the AGPS retail discount rate and its application be revised and made more in keeping with commercial practice. (Para 13.45)

Distribution of publications

R.62 That the AGPS undertake negotiations with departments and statutory authorities with a view to assuming a greater AGPS responsibility for the distribution of departmental publications. (Para 13.49)

R.63 That the Board of Review regularly review the distribution activities of departments and, where appropriate, recommend that elements of departmental distribution be undertaken by the AGPS. (Para 13.49)

R.64 That, where a department is unwilling to relinquish distribution responsibility following a recommendation of the Board of Review, the matter be referred to the Committee for its consideration. (Para 13.49)

R.65 That the Public Service Board investigate the equipment needs of the distribution sub-section of the AGPS with a view to recommending the replacement of unsuitable equipment or providing new suitable equipment, where necessary. (Para 13.52)

Official and free issue of departmental publications

R.66 That the AGPS remain the authority responsible for preparing guidelines governing the official and free issue of departmental publications in accordance with government policy. (Para 13.58)

R.67 That official and free issue guidelines drawn up by the AGPS be revised to draw on the experience gained in the two years since free issue guidelines were introduced and that these be submitted to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate recommendations to the Government, and that this Committee be notified of such recommendations. (Para 13.58)

R.68 That where a department wishes to undertake a distribution of one of its publications which is in excess of the guidelines, such distribution be permitted, but the additional copies required to meet the excess distribution be acquired from the AGPS at the recommended retail price less 40 per cent. (Para 13.58)

R.69 That where official and free issue distribution of departmental publications is in excess of AGPS guidelines, the matter be reported by the AGPS to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action. (Para 13.58)

Inquiry Centres

R.70 That the Parliament undertake an investigation into the requirements of a complete inquiry and information service for the general public and that the results of such an inquiry be laid before the Parliament as soon as possible. (Para 13.65)

R.71 That steps be taken by the appropriate authorities to revise and improve the information section on government services provided in the front of telephone directories. (Para 13.65)

R.72 That the AGPS compile a directory containing information on the services provided by government departments and statutory authorities; such directory to be complete, simple to read and understand and updated on an annual basis. (Para 13.65)

Marketing policy

R.73 That AGPS thoroughly investigate the methods it uses to assess likely public demand of publications. (Para 13.68)

R.74 That any proposals which might arise from the AGPS examination of its methods employed in assessing marketing requirements be approved by the Board of Review. (Para 13.69)

R.75 That the Board of Review ensure that departments provide suitable information to the AGPS upon which a satisfactory marketing assessment can be carried out. (Para 13.69)

R.76 That, within normal commercial business constraints, the AGPS advertise the existence of its Bookshops, mail order services and the range of publications which are available through these sources by consistent advertising campaigns in newspapers, journals and, where appropriate, the broadcasting media. (Para 13.79)

R.77 That AGPS encourage the reviewing of its publications in suitable news media. (Para 13.79)

R.78 That computer lists of relevant and topical publications be prepared and issued to target user groups. (Para 13.79)

R.79 That attention be directed towards advertising titles of interest in a particular State in that State's media. (Para 13.79)

R.80 That regular evaluations of AGPS promotion methods be undertaken to ensure that the most effective and economic means are employed. (Para 13.79)

Disposal of surplus stocks

R.81 That AGPS surplus sales stocks be disposed of only after first offering copies to the National Librarian, the Australian Archives and the author body. (Para 13.81)

R.82 That two copies of each AGPS publication be retained by the AGPS within its records. (Para 13.81)

Publishing programs

R.83 That with the approval of the Board of Review, AGPS be permitted to undertake its own publishing program either singly or in conjunction with other departments or statutory authorities. (Para 13.84)

R.84 That whenever the AGPS seeks authority from an author body to reprint a publication the author body advise the AGPS of its decision, without delay, with regard to the request. (Para 13.84)

R.85 That—

- (a) where AGPS requires a reprint of a publication, the establishment costs of reprinting be met by the AGPS (departments may acquire copies at run-on cost);
- (b) where a department requires a reprint of a publication for its internal purposes and no 'for sale' copies are available through the AGPS, the establishment costs of reprinting be met by the department (AGPS may acquire 'for sale' copies at run-on cost);

(c) where there is a joint AGPS and departmental requirement for reprinting, the establishment costs be shared between the two bodies on a mutually agreed basis; and

(d) where disagreement occurs in (c) above, the matter be referred to the Board of Review for resolution. (Para 13.84)

Service Publications Section, AGPS

R.86 That responsibility for the Gazette Office be transferred to the Government Printer. (Para 13.87)

R.87 That any losses to the Government Printer Trust Account arising out of the publication and distribution of the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette be met from Consolidated Revenue. (Para 13.87)

R.88 That this Committee continue to have an oversight of the Ministerial Document Service to ensure that it continues to be an information source and does not develop into a propaganda instrument. (Para 13.88)

R.89 That any losses to the Publication Trust Account arising from the operations of the Ministerial Document Service be met from Consolidated Revenue. (Para 13.88)

Management services

R.90 That a management services section be re-established within the AGPS to support its activities. (Para 14.2)

R.91 That a specialist in the field of printing and publishing be appointed on a limited period contract to the position of Controller, AGPS. (Para 14.3)

Oversight of Printing and Publishing

Charter of Responsibilities

R.92 That a Charter of Responsibilities be established by way of Cabinet decision to cover the responsibilities and functions of the Parliament (after consultation with the Presiding Officers), the AGPS, departments and statutory authorities in the printing and publishing of Commonwealth material. (Para 16.5)

R.93 That the responsibilities of the various printing and publishing agents be as set out in Chapter 18 of this Report. (Para 18.1)

Board of Review

R.94 That a Board of Review be established on an inter-departmental basis to meet as often as may be deemed necessary to undertake a supervisory role over Commonwealth printing and publishing as described in the Charter of Responsibilities and as has been referred to from time to time in this Report. (Para 17.2)

R.95 That the Board of Review comprise an officer from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet or the Department of Administrative Services, the Public Service Board, the Australian Government Publishing Service, the Government Printing Office and such other members as may be determined from time to time by the government. (Para 17.3)

R.96 That a position of permanent secretary to the Board of Review be established and that this position and such other support staff as may be deemed necessary be provided by the AGPS. (Para 17.3)

R.97 That the proposed Board of Review report to the Joint Committee on Publications annually, and on such additional occasions as the Board of Review may deem appropriate, on:

- (a) significant departures from AGPS circulars; and the Charter of Responsibilities by departments and, where appropriate, statutory authorities;
- (b) differences between Commonwealth publishing agents which, within its own powers, the Board of Review is unable to resolve (together with brief comments on the matter from the respective parties involved);
- (c) matters concerning its function and powers where the guidance of the Committee is desired; and
- (d) such other matters as may be determined by the Board of Review or the Committee. (Para 17.6)

Other Matters

Bibliographical control and overseas exchange

R.98 That each publication produced by departments and statutory authorities be notified to AGPS upon its release, together with details as to the status of the document, whether it is for sale or free, and from where it can be obtained. (Para 19.3)

R.99 That the AGPS initiate discussions with representatives of the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services and the State Library Boards on the desirability of establishing an advisory board similar to the HMSO Services Working Party. (Para 19.5)

R.100 That steps be taken to ensure that departments and statutory authorities comply with the requirements of the *Copyright Act 1968* in relation to library deposit. (Para 19.8)

R.101 That all government departments and statutory authorities provide to the AGPS sufficient copies of each of their publications (which are not published through the AGPS) to meet authorised overseas exchange commitments. (Para 19.10)

R.102 That the AGPS, in conjunction with the National Library, meet authorised overseas exchange commitments from its own stocks of publications or from those forwarded by departments and statutory authorities. (Para 19.10)

R.103 That where departments or statutory authorities fail to meet bibliographic, copyright, deposit or exchange requirements, such failure be reported to the Board of Review by the AGPS. (Para 19.10)

Copyright Law

R.104 That as a matter of urgency the Government resolve outstanding questions of copyright of Commonwealth government publications. (Para 20.3)

R.105 That when the questions concerning copyright have been resolved by the government, all necessary information be printed in the appropriate position in each government publication. (Para 20.3)

The Parliament

R.106 That the Presiding Officers continue their examination of the most suitable computer information retrieval system for introduction into the Commonwealth Parliament. (Para 21.2)

R.107 That all necessary resources be provided to ensure that the introduction of a suitable computer information retrieval system is introduced into the Parliament at the earliest practical time. (Para 21.2)

The Joint Committee on Publications

R.108 That the Standing Orders of both Houses of Parliament be amended to enable the Joint Committee on Publications to:

- (i) move from place to place; and
- (ii) form itself into a sub-committee when considered necessary.

PART I—INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1—BACKGROUND

The Joint Committee on Publications

1.1 The Joint Committee on Publications was established in its present form in June 1970 on the recommendation of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications (1964).¹ (Henceforth referred to as the Erwin Committee after its Chairman, Mr G. D. Erwin, M.P.)

1.2 Standing Order 36 of the Senate and Standing Order 28 of the House of Representatives provide for the referral of matters to the Committee by the relevant Minister. They also empower the Joint Committee to initiate its own inquiries within its area of responsibility, namely, the printing, publication and distribution of Parliamentary and Government Publications.

Background to Inquiry

1.3 On 15 September 1976 the then Chairman of the House of Representatives Expenditure Committee (the Hon. R. V. Garland, M.P.) wrote to the Chairman of the Joint Committee on Publications suggesting that the Committee consider the feasibility of an inquiry into certain aspects of the Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS), including the operation of AGPS Bookshops. Mr Garland's letter indicated the Expenditure Committee's wish to avoid possible duplication of responsibilities between committees and suggested that if an inquiry were undertaken the Joint Committee on Publications was the most appropriate Committee to undertake such an investigation.

1.4 At a meeting of the Joint Committee on Publications on 15 September 1976, Mr Garland's letter was considered and agreement was reached by the Committee to undertake the suggested inquiry. Among the factors which influenced the Committee to undertake the inquiry were:

- the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications recommended the establishment of the Australian Government Publishing Service and envisaged that future oversight of AGPS activities, functions and responsibilities would be undertaken by the Joint Committee on Publications;
- during the course of previous inquiries by the Committee into Departmental Publishing Activities;² and the Purpose, Scope and Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series,³ evidence and concerns expressed by witnesses (including AGPS officers) indicated to the Committee that there was a need for a review of AGPS activities;
- since the establishment of the AGPS in 1970 much has happened in the field of Commonwealth printing and publishing and the part played in it by the AGPS;
- after eight years it was timely for the Committee to conduct a review of AGPS activities to ensure that it was fulfilling its role in Commonwealth publishing as envisaged by the Erwin Committee;
- whether the operations of the AGPS are purposeful and carried out in the most efficient and effective manner;

¹ Australia. Parliament, *Parliamentary and Government Publications, Report from the Joint Select Committee* (Chairman: G. D. Erwin, Parl. Paper 32, 1964 (Canberra, 1964), Para 373. (Henceforth, Erwin Committee Report).

² Australia. Parliament, *Departmental Publishing Activities, Report from the Joint Committee on Publications* (Chairman: Hon. O. D. Erwin), Parl. Paper 285 (Canberra, 1972).

³ Australia. Parliament, *Purpose, Scope and Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series, Report from the Joint Committee on Publications* (Chairman: J. C. Hodges), Parl. Paper 216 (Canberra, 1977).

- no overall review of Commonwealth printing and publishing had been undertaken since the presentation of the Erwin Committee Report in 1964; and
- the expertise built up by the Committee since its establishment in 1970 in the main areas of Commonwealth publishing would be of assistance in any such investigation.

The Committee's Inquiry

1.5 From the outset the Committee determined that the Inquiry would embrace all areas of Commonwealth printing and publishing. Since the AGPS plays a most prominent part in this sphere, particular emphasis has been placed on its operations. The Committee was also concerned to see whether the test of time had proven the recommendations of the Erwin Committee to be appropriate and in the best interests of Commonwealth printing and publishing.

1.6 Initially, the Committee set itself no Terms of Inquiry, preferring to obtain through submissions and evidence as much material as possible on the broad range of Commonwealth responsibilities in the field of printing and publishing before determining which specific matters would receive the Committee's attention.

1.7 Having examined the great deal of information placed before it, the Committee finally resolved to restrict its investigations to the broader roles played by the AGPS, departments and statutory authorities in the printing, publishing and distribution of Parliamentary and government publications. To become too involved in the more detailed aspects of staffing, internal management and financial and administrative arrangements at base levels would extend the Inquiry beyond an acceptable period and would involve the Committee in matters inappropriate for consideration by a committee of this nature.

1.8 The Committee was aware that when inviting submissions from interested persons and bodies it was more likely to attract comments of a critical nature concerning AGPS activities since it is a natural reaction not to comment or pass judgement on a matter or area of operation if it is performing to one's satisfaction. At all stages of its Inquiry the Committee has attempted to balance this factor with its own knowledge of the considerable achievements made by AGPS in its eight years of operation.

1.9 To aid its consideration of what is felt to be a most complex matter, the Committee had at its disposal submissions and the background references referred to therein, the evidence of this Inquiry and the Erwin Report. To these have been added the background knowledge of the subject matter of the Inquiry which has been built up over previous inquiries and investigations into Parliamentary and government publishing generally.

Definitions

1.10 For the purpose of this Report the Committee provides, hereunder, a brief listing of the technical terms and concepts which will be referred to from time to time in this Report. It is not intended to be a complete glossary of printing and publishing terms nor are the definitions exhaustive. These are as follows:

- (a) *board of review* (proposed) is a group of interdepartmental officers whose function is to overview the government's printing and publishing program (as set out in Chapter 17 of this Report);
- (b) *departments* are those departments of State which are listed in Schedule 2 of the *Public Service Act 1922*, excluding the Parliamentary departments;
- (c) *general printing* items are stationery, forms, leaflets, folders, brochures, newsletters, etc., as well as documents which are produced exclusively for internal government purposes or which have a security classification;

- (d) *parliamentary departments* are the Departments of the Senate, House of Representatives, Parliamentary Reporting Staff, Parliamentary Library and the Joint House;
- (e) *period contract* is the letting of a printing or other contract over a fixed period to cover certain classes of homogeneous work;
- (f) *print procurement* is the process by which printing is arranged for material originating from an author body;
- (g) *printing* is the process of transforming an image on to receptive material to form a body of text or an illustration, and in the Commonwealth sphere is undertaken by—
 - (i) the Commonwealth Government Printer, State Government Printers or commercial printers, and
 - (ii) in-house reproduction units situated within departments or statutory authorities;
- (h) *publications* are defined as all documents and microforms emanating from the Parliament, departments and statutory authorities, however printed or reprinted, which are intended for use other than solely within the body issuing the documents, (other than those documents which are not intended for internal distribution); it excludes items of general printing and documents which have a security classification placed upon them;
- (i) *publishing* in the Commonwealth sphere is the process of editing material and arranging for its printing, promotion and sale and/or distribution;
- (j) *responsible minister* is the minister who administratively is responsible for the Australian Government Publishing Service; and
- (k) *statutory authorities* include all bodies, instrumentalities, boards, etc., other than departments, which have been created by Commonwealth Statute.

Work of the Committee, submissions and witnesses

1.11 The Committee was unable to complete its Inquiry before the dissolution of the Parliament on 10 November 1977. On 15 March 1978 following its re-appointment in the new Parliament, the Committee resolved to continue its Inquiry although some Members were either no longer Members of the House of Representatives or were not re-appointed to the Committee. Also, on 30 June 1978, the term of service as Senator of two Members of the Committee ceased. After 1 July 1978, a general re-appointment of Senate committee positions was undertaken and two Senators did not choose to remain on the Committee. Accordingly, four Senators were appointed to the Committee when Parliament resumed for the Budget sittings in 1978.⁴ For practical purposes, the Inquiry and the evidence collected during the period 1976-78 are treated as one continuous investigation.

1.12 The Committee placed advertisements in State capital city newspapers inviting persons and organisations to forward submissions in connection with the Inquiry. In addition, the Committee sought submissions from a number of librarians and other persons known to have expertise and an interest in the fields of publishing and the supply of information on government. In all, ninety-three submissions were received (see Appendix I—List of Submissions). The Committee took evidence on seven occasions from a total of forty-one witnesses (see Appendix II—List of Witnesses). In addition, the Committee undertook inspections of AGPS, departmental and State Government printing and publishing facilities in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The Committee records its appreciation of those persons and organisations

⁴ See membership at p. iii of this Report.

who have assisted during the course of the Inquiry. In particular, the Committee thanks the many officers of the Australian Government Publishing Service who throughout the Inquiry have provided extensive and thoughtful comments and assistance to the Committee.

1.13 The Committee has the honour to present the following Report to both Houses of Parliament.

CHAPTER 2—THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY AND GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, AND ITS PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON COMMONWEALTH PUBLISHING

The role of Commonwealth publications

2.1 The publications of the Parliament and of the Commonwealth departments and agencies are of vital interest to Members of Parliament. Official publications are used extensively by them in all phases of their work.¹

So stated the first paragraph of the Erwin Committee Report, 1964. Since that Report was presented to Parliament and acted upon by various governments, the procedures and methods employed in the publishing of printed matter emanating from the Commonwealth have undergone many radical changes. The Committee has found that in almost all respects these changes have been to the betterment of the style, form, quality and purpose of Commonwealth publications. Few would disagree that following the adoption of the Erwin Committee recommendations which led to the establishment of the Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS) in 1970 a wider range of Commonwealth publications have become available to the man in the street. The availability of published government material is an essential element of Western Democracy. Good communication via the media of print is necessary between the government and the people to enable—

- the law of the land to be made available to each citizen to be read and understood;
- the reasons for government policy and its involvement in the lives of each citizen to be publicised; and
- information on Parliament, government and their respective activities to be made available to the electorate.

2.2 Since the implementation of the recommendations of the Erwin Committee have played such an important part in making these objectives possible in Australia through the establishment of the AGPS and by encouraging a more rational Commonwealth publishing program, it is considered desirable to outline the situation with regard to printing, publishing and the general availability of Commonwealth publications prior to the implementation of the Erwin Committee recommendations. In so doing, the reasons for the appointment of the Erwin Committee and the aims of its recommendations will be summarised. It is not considered necessary to go into great detail as the overall situation was thoroughly covered by the Report itself.

Events leading to the establishment of the Committee

2.3 From the late 1940s through to the 1970s the growth in the role and responsibilities of government was most pronounced. Together with this growth flowed a development, to an even greater extent, in the number and complexity of Parliamentary and government publications. With the advent of the 1960s Parliamentarians and the public became thirsty for more knowledge and understanding, and sought greater access to information on the functions and activities of government. This was particularly evident in the social welfare area of government activity. The demands for freedom of information and open government soon followed. Prior to 1970 the Australian government was not equipped to handle the pressures placed on its printing, publishing and distribution resources. This point was given great emphasis by the

¹ Erwin Committee Report, op. cit. Para 1.

Hon. G. D. Erwin, formerly Chairman of the Joint Select Committee when he presented a paper to this Committee at its first hearing. The content of the paper formed the basis of a submission to Cabinet in 1962. The paper stated, in part:

no single office is responsible for publishing all Commonwealth documents, for establishing some uniformity in printing styles, standards and the manner in which copy should be prepared, and for curbing unnecessary extravagance where that takes place.

no single office can supply copies of all Commonwealth publications arrangements for advising the potential user of Commonwealth publications as to (a) what is available, and (b) how to obtain them, are so inadequate as to be practically non-existent.

little is done to have Commonwealth publications available for would-be readers in the capital cities.

as each department is responsible for the issue of its own publications, widely differing methods in the distribution of publications occur.

the difficulty experienced with the Government Printer in coping with the quantity of work asked of him after the close of each financial year.²

2.4 On the basis of this submission the Government proposed the establishment of a select committee of both Houses of Parliament to inquire into and report on the printing, publication and distribution of Parliamentary Papers and all government publications. The Committee was appointed on 5 December 1962 and its Report was tabled in Parliament in May 1964.

Principal recommendations of the Erwin Committee

2.5 The principal recommendations of the Erwin Committee related to the establishment of the AGPS. Paragraphs 35, 36 and 193 of the Erwin Committee Report established the importance of the AGPS, as follows:

It is your Committee's view that the growth in publishing by departments, coupled with the difficulties being experienced by all concerned, call for the early establishment of a central government publishing office to undertake the publishing function of departments.

The establishment of such an office is your Committee's main recommendation, and it is upon the acceptance of this recommendation that the successful implementation of many of its other recommendations depend.

The main recommendation is supported by another, namely, that the proposed central government publishing office be the sole publisher of all departmental publications.

2.6 The recommendations of the Erwin Committee dealt with many other matters of interest to the Committee in this Inquiry, see Appendix III—Relevant Recommendations of the Report of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications (Erwin Committee Report). Where appropriate, these recommendations will be reproduced or referred to in this Report.

² Evidence, p. 2

CHAPTER 3—COMMONWEALTH PUBLISHING 1964-1970

Preliminary to the establishment of the Australian Government Publishing Service

3.1 Little change took place within the field of Commonwealth printing and publishing till 1968, despite the fact that in 1964 the Government had given interim approval to the main recommendations of the Erwin Committee. During this period the opportunity was taken to plan the introduction of the new publishing service, and to arrive at the appropriate procedures under which its operations might best be carried out. Thought was given to the preliminary planning stages as suggested by Erwin at paragraphs 195 and 197:

195. If your Committee's recommendations are accepted, some years must elapse before they can become fully effective. It would be foolish for the new office to endeavour to provide a full service for all departments until it is properly equipped, staffed and geared to undertake such a responsibility.

197. It is of the utmost importance to the successful implementation of the recommendations that the new office be directed and staffed by persons of ability, with the right degree of imagination, initiative and common sense. The representative of the Public Service Board, Mr P. A. Nott, rightly warned that:

'... there would be nothing worse than launching some new form of machinery which would fall down simply because the people who were in control of it did not have a broad enough conception of what the total task really was.'

3.2 In October 1968, the AGPS was established within the Department of the Treasury. Shortly thereafter, the AGPS, through the Department of the Treasury issued Treasury Circular G4—Procedures and Standards for Publications presented to Parliament. It was a useful exercise and a forerunner to the positive role which the AGPS was to play in years to come. In July 1970, the Publishing Branch of the AGPS was formed and the AGPS became fully operational as a separate and complete entity.

CHAPTER 4—COMMONWEALTH PUBLISHING 1970-1978

Growth in the number of official publications

4.1 In 1964 the Erwin Committee at paragraph 13 of its Report stated that each year the Commonwealth, through the Parliament, departments and agencies published over 2,000 separate publications at an estimated annual cost of some \$8m. Today AGPS alone annually publishes over 4,500 publications at an estimated value of \$24m, a little short of one-half of an estimated total of \$60m which is spent on official publications. The balance of \$36m represents the publishing programs of statutory authorities which are not processed through AGPS facilities. As a further indication of growth it was estimated that departmental publishing expenditure for 1977-78 increased by some 16 per cent over that of the previous financial year.

4.2 The Committee is concerned with the growth of the Commonwealth's publishing program. It feels that in many instances individual departments and statutory authorities have tended to over-produce the number of publications necessary to explain and complete their departmental and statutory responsibilities to the Parliament and the citizen. The impression of overpublishing is not only reflected by the number of individual publications and copies thereof produced, but also by the unnecessarily extensive content and high quality production standard of many publications produced either internally, through in-house printing and reproduction units, or by outside publishers. To single out individual departments and statutory authorities which appear to be over zealous in their publishing programs would be premature at this stage. However, the Committee gives notice that in subsequent years it will be taking a more active interest in the publishing programs of Commonwealth author bodies to ensure that such programs are justified by the publishing objectives of the author body. Overall content and guidelines for publishing standards with regard to annual reports are currently being examined by the Committee. It is expected that the Committee's Report on this matter will be tabled in Parliament in the near future.

Present role and responsibilities of Commonwealth publishers

4.3 Publishing on behalf of the Commonwealth is undertaken by four major groups. These, together with their current allotted or assumed responsibilities are set out hereunder:

- (a) *The Parliament* is responsible for publishing the principal Parliamentary publications, namely, Bills, Notice Papers, *Journals of the Senate, Votes and Proceedings* of the House of Representatives, *Hansard* and the Parliamentary Papers Series. The Parliament also undertakes the publication of a number of reports of its Committees through its own in-house printing facilities. Other reports of Parliamentary Committees are printed and published by the AGPS. With the exception of some internal or official arrangements as determined within Parliament, distribution is carried out by the AGPS through mail order and Bookshop sales in accordance with Parliamentary instruction.¹
- (b) *The Australian Government Publishing Service* through its various branches provide services as described hereunder:
 - (i) The Government Printing Office provides facilities for the typesetting, printing, binding, micro-filming, etc., of some Parliamentary, departmental and statutory authority publications, Acts, Statutory Rules and a portion of the general printing needs of departments.

¹ For further detail, see the Report of the Joint Committee on Publications, Purpose, Scope and Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series, Part, Paper 216 of 1977.

- (ii) The Publishing Branch responsibilities were described by the then Secretary to the Treasury in a circular to all Permanent Heads dated 9 December 1969 as:
to estimate the potential market, to provide technical assistance before and during production, to arrange the production of all departmental publications and to assist departments in achieving the best possible distribution.
- In addition, the AGPS was given responsibility for Government advertising and the procurement of stationery and other minor common use stores for all departments. Essentially, AGPS provides its services to all departments which are listed under Schedule 2 to the *Public Service Act 1922*.
- (iii) Since 1970, the AGPS has assumed responsibility for its own publishing program involving the funding, compilation and editorial control of the Style Manual, the Commonwealth Record, the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette and the Commonwealth Directory. More recently it has undertaken a new co-publishing function through such productions as the 'Stay Alive' handbook.
- (iv) The AGPS provides advice and personnel to assist the Government in problem areas where AGPS has particular expertise, for example, pricing of government publications, the review of departmental in-house printing operations, etc.
- (v) Over recent years, the government of the day has given additional responsibilities to the AGPS which provide it with regulatory powers concerning departmental publishing programs, the extent of free issue and the maintenance of publishing standards for departmental publications. These are set out in AGPS Circulars 26 and 27.
- (c) *Departments* listed under Schedule 2 to the *Public Service Act 1922* arrange printing and publishing in one of three ways:
- (i) The original cabinet determination in 1968 required departments to arrange their publishing program through the AGPS, with a few minor exceptions this direction still applies although some direct responsibility continues to exist when departments arrange their own general printing needs. The decision as to what a department may publish has remained the responsibility of its minister through the department and within the limitations of funds appropriated by Parliament. The originating department has retained responsibility for authorship and the editorial review of material. Also, responsibility for advice on matters of copyright, royalties, etc. has been left with the Attorney-General's Department, although AGPS does offer guidance in these matters. Over recent years the inclusion of libellous or defamatory matter have been assumed by the AGPS as one of its responsibilities.
- (ii) Under AGPS Circular 26 Departments may arrange their general printing requirements for jobs estimated to cost less than \$500 in value. For jobs estimated to cost between \$500 and \$5,000 they must first be offered to the Government Printer. Should he be unable to carry out printing, departments may place these jobs, in accordance with Finance Directions, with a printing contractor of their choice.
- (iii) In-house printing facilities normally are available for use by a department or a group of departments. Usually, the capacity of these units is small and they exist primarily to produce 'internal' material. The exceptions are such plants as the Department of Defence facility at Brunswick

in Victoria, which is capable of producing high class publications. Occasionally, a department produces, by in-house means, a publication of some importance which subsequently will require full publication by the AGPS for sales and distribution purposes. AGPS has laid down standards for the production of such publications. (The matter of departmental in-house printing facilities will be dealt with more fully at Chapter 9 of this Report.)

Official and free issue distribution of its publications are arranged by the department or, at its request, by the AGPS. Sales are undertaken by the AGPS although in some instances departments have their own retail outlets.

- (d) *Statutory authorities* have certain freedoms guaranteed by statutory independence. Their printing and publishing programs, in the main, are carried out by either of two processes:
- (i) Statutory authorities are exempt from the requirement to use AGPS facilities, unless they so desire, except where publications are required to be tabled in Parliament pursuant to statute. AGPS also encourages statutory authorities to follow its production standards when a publication is likely to be tabled in Parliament; and
- (ii) As with departments a number of statutory authorities have developed their own internal printing facilities for printing and publishing. Where AGPS receives advice that a statutory authority publication might be an appropriate sale item, a request is made for additional copies to be produced simultaneously by running on appropriate numbers for sales purposes. Official free issue distribution is normally undertaken by the authority or, if requested, by the AGPS. If required, the sale of statutory authority publications is carried out by the AGPS.

4.4 Within the terms of this Inquiry, the Committee has been content to look at the overall methods and procedures involved in printing and publishing Commonwealth publications. It is concerned with recommending a more rational and direct set of responsibilities and procedures for those who are directly responsible for the Commonwealth publishing program. The implementation of these recommendations should lead to overall savings in certain areas of departmental staffing. In other areas, the Committee will be recommending an extension of services to the public, particularly by the AGPS, which are designed to assist the achievement of the prime responsibility of Commonwealth publications—communicating with, and providing necessary information for the people. It is a right of the people to be informed, and it is a responsibility of the government to ensure that this right is met.

Assessment of the role played in Commonwealth publishing by the Australian Government Publishing Service

4.5 From an examination of the evidence presented and through its own experience in the field, the Committee concludes that the concept of the AGPS as originally proposed by the Erwin Committee is basically sound and has led to vast improvement in the standard of Commonwealth publications and their availability to the public.

4.6 AGPS plays an active role in the three major areas involved in printing and publishing departmental publications, namely, the preparation of material, its printing and finally, its distribution. At this point in the Committee's Report it is desirable to provide a brief summary of AGPS achievements.

- (a) (i) *Preparation of material.* While the AGPS does not have any control over editorial content (other than the inclusion of libellous or defamatory

material) its services offer design and editorial assistance as well as guidance on appropriate standards for departmental publications. Prior to its establishment as a separate entity in 1970, the AGPS operated as a branch of the Department of the Treasury. Amongst its first undertakings were the issue of the First Edition of the Style Manual in 1966 and the issue of Treasury Circular G4 setting out guidelines for standards of documents presented to Parliament.

(ii) These, in subsequent years, have been amended and up-dated to meet the changing needs of the users of publications and originating departments. Their value is unquestioned and an element of uniformity of design and style has been achieved in the majority of Commonwealth publications. Any person who would care to examine a selection of Commonwealth publications produced in 1966 and compare them with their 1978 counterparts could not fail to be impressed by the design and production standard of the latter.

(iii) This is not to say that unnecessary expense has been incurred by the raising of these standards to acceptable levels. The Committee would argue that the AGPS has helped to achieve an appropriate standard for the majority of publications. For example, the practice of departments arranging the Parliamentary tabling of an important document in a roneoed form, which is poor in design and production standard and requires considerable expense to re-print it for the Parliamentary Papers Series, has all but been eliminated. Departments, by initially producing in the one production run both the departmental tabling version and the Parliamentary Paper version can achieve considerable overall cost savings.

(iv) Conversely, many departments and statutory authorities have been guilty of producing a document of too high a quality to meet its purpose. The influence of AGPS circulars has been responsible for achieving a standard to an appropriate quality.

(v) Acceptance of the recommendations of the Erwin Committee have resulted in a standardisation of paper sizes and quality. Prior to 1966 there existed some fifteen paper sizes. Reports were tabled in Parliament in three basic sizes. If these were not foolscap size, reprinting was necessary if they were to be included in the Series. Now there are four basic paper sizes and it is very rare for a document not to be tabled in B5 size (the present standard for the Parliamentary Papers Series) with the Parliamentary Paper stocks being run on simultaneously with the departmental production run. The cost savings of adhering to this process during production of a Series which contains some 400 documents per annum are considerable.

- (b) *Printing.* Prior to the establishment of the AGPS, departments arranged their own printing. Since then, AGPS has centralised within its own operations the print procurement process for departmental publications. However, the responsibility for procuring printing for general printing items estimated to cost under \$5,000 recently has been returned to departments, although jobs estimated to cost between \$500 and \$5,000 must first be offered to the Government Printer. For jobs estimated to cost in excess of \$5,000, printing is arranged by the AGPS. To the Committee, the advantages of a central print procurement body are considerable. AGPS is in a position to know which contractors are capable of undertaking certain printing functions within a required time span and whether a tendered estimate is an appropriate charge. It can ensure that a job is produced to a satisfactory standard. Such a system should achieve overall savings in departmental staffing due to

the development of uniform procedures and the acquired expertise of the AGPS. However, it would appear that a number of departments disagree with this opinion. It is a controversial issue and will be dealt with more fully later in the Report (Para 10.6).

- (c) (i) *Distribution.* This is the area of greatest achievement by the AGPS. Prior to its formation Commonwealth publications were distributed to certain target groups by the department involved. If the man in the street was not fortunate enough to be included on a distribution list he would need to enquire from the originating department. On occasions he would be able to obtain publications free, on others at a charge or not at all. Another means involved approaching the Government Printing Office or sub-Treasury offices which provided a small bookshop service in State capital cities and trust that requests could be met from the limited stock available. The processes could vary considerably from department to department, often depending upon the budgetary position of the department at the time.
- (ii) From modest beginnings of a Bookshop and mail order service in Canberra in 1970, the overall situation has been vastly improved. Sales (excluding those of agents) have gone from \$8,924 by the Government Printer and sub-Treasury offices in 1967-68 to \$441,995 in 1970-71 with the establishment of the AGPS, to \$2,235,136 in 1975-76, to \$2,983,152 (provisional) in 1977-78. The number of titles available has grown from minimal numbers prior to 1970 to 2,000 in 1973 to 17,000 in 1978.
- (iii) There is little doubt that mail order sales and Bookshop operations have contributed significantly to the basic aims of dissemination of information, open government and freedom of information.

4.7 The above is a summary of AGPS achievements in its brief history from partial operations in 1966, to full scale operations in 1970 till the present time. However, these achievements have not been made without cost both in monetary terms and at the expense of the service element which the Erwin Committee and the Government of 1968 tried so hard to seek and introduce. These will be discussed more fully at appropriate stages in the Report.

PART II—THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING SERVICE

CHAPTER 5—ADMINISTRATION

Administrative position in the Public Service

5.1 Paragraph 201 of the Erwin Committee Report stated:

Your Committee believes that it is important for the proposed office to operate with a large measure of autonomy, and, though it may be placed administratively under the control of a department, its head should be directly responsible to a Minister of State.

5.2 When the AGPS was established fully in July 1970, it was attached to the Department of the Treasury with its Controller being directly responsible to the Secretary to the Treasury. Until July 1975 it was allowed to operate as the Erwin Committee suggested with a reasonable degree of autonomy with only minimal ministerial and departmental direction. AGPS was allowed to develop its administrative structure and responsibilities in its own way. During this time, the Erwin Report acted as a charter which the AGPS sought to follow.

5.3 Divergence from the objective of maintaining a central publishing and distribution agency first began in July 1975 when the responsibility for the Bookshops, or, as they were then known, AGPS Publication and Inquiry Centres, was transferred from the AGPS to the Australian Office of Information. While in later years the responsibility for the Bookshops has been returned to the AGPS, the degree of departmental intervention and the absorption of functions into those of the administering department has continued unabated. The situation has now reached a stage where with the continued pressure of staff ceilings the AGPS is unwilling to accept additional publishing responsibilities or to stock a wider and more extensive range of publications for fear of further deteriorating its services to clients and the public. In recent times, the AGPS has been forced to concede functions to other departments or its central department, and by so doing, there is a danger of the AGPS functions becoming so decentralised that the original concept of the Erwin Committee may be seriously undermined; only deleterious effects on the efficiency of AGPS operations can occur. AGPS must be allowed to get on with its job.

5.4 Apart from the intervention referred to above, the AGPS has been subject to extensive administrative re-arrangements since its establishment. These variations are listed at Appendix IV—AGPS—Administrative Structural Variations 1969-1977. The Committee is aware that many of these variations were instituted as a result of government concern that AGPS was not operating to its satisfaction. But the extent of the variations has been such that there has been considerable disruption of AGPS activities over the years.

5.5 However, the Committee is also aware that other changes have occurred for short-term benefit or financial expediency. Despite the suggestion given by the First Assistant Secretary responsible for the AGPS (Mr F. A. Nott) that the AGPS has arrived at its rightful home within the Department of Administrative Services, the Committee is not satisfied that changes either within the public service or the department itself will not occur in the future with an accompanying disruptive effect. Ten years ago when an examination of AGPS autonomy was being considered by government its autonomy might not have received the same support as it attracts today. With more concern being directed towards freedom of information and the means of

achieving its dissemination, *ad hoc* interference must be prevented. Consistent with the autonomy which will be proposed for the AGPS throughout this Report, the Committee recommends:

That the position of Controller (AGPS) be re-established and be directly responsible to the Secretary of the Department which is under the administrative control of the responsible Minister.

The implementation of this recommendation would return the AGPS to the position of semi-autonomy which it held when first established.

5.6 In evidence given before the Committee, the Hon. G. D. Erwin stated:

we [the Erwin Committee] did discuss in Committee whether the AGPS should be a statutory body. We could see certain wisdoms in that suggestion, but after consideration we thought not, that it would be more or less removing this body too much from government working, moving it too far from the departments and from the Parliament.¹

5.7 The Committee has always tended to support this view in the past. However, the AGPS is a semi-commercial entity. To provide an effective service which is capable of reacting to the needs of government and the publications market it must be free to react to changing circumstances. Its present position within the Department of Administrative Services does not allow this flexibility. As with all government departments it is currently subject to staff cuts and ceilings. As a service agent whose work volume has expanded in value from \$17.2m in 1973-74 to \$24.6m in 1977-78 and who has been responsible for an increase in sales of publications from \$0.9m to \$2.9m in the same period, the staff of AGPS over a similar period has been reduced by approximately 47 personnel. The Committee has been advised that a further lowering of the staff ceiling for the AGPS by approximately 90 positions is proposed for this financial year. (See Appendix V—Staff, Australian Government Publishing Service 1970-1978). To this the Committee adds that the AGPS operates in a specialised area. It is one in which it is not possible to substitute a clerk for a printer or a designer for a client service officer.

5.8 The Committee is aware that many of AGPS procedures are too bureaucratic and in some areas involve the employment of more staff than necessary. This point will be referred to in other places in this Report and recommendations made where appropriate. However, if it is accepted that publications are to be produced by government, that they are to be of an acceptable standard and that they be readily available to the people, then such service cannot be achieved 'on the cheap'. To further reduce staff numbers or unnecessarily decentralise the AGPS function will only destroy the original Erwin concept, which in most respects has stood the test of time. The implementation of the Erwin recommendations has made Australia a leader in government publishing in the eyes of many nations. To erode this position would be a backward step, particularly when other nations, such as Canada and New Zealand, and indeed our own States are starting to make new and similar advances. The Committee feels that one of its prime responsibilities is to protect the innovations which have been made to Commonwealth publishing and to promote the supply of information.

5.9 In the Chapters which follow the Committee will be recommending that the two primary branches of AGPS be given autonomy of action and financial resources. To achieve this and to satisfy the Government's concern with economic operations, both in terms of money and staff, the Committee will be directing its attention to making the two main branches separate economic and viable units.

¹ Evidence, p. 3.

Commercial orientation

5.10 Throughout this Report the Committee has consistently taken the view that the activities of the AGPS and the Government Printer should be operated on a commercial, self-supporting basis. In this way total services can be provided to clients and customers without the government of the day being overly concerned with the cost involved in providing the service. To achieve total service in much the same way as Telecom and Australia Post, service charges may have to be levied against client departments or perhaps prices may have to be increased to customers but, at least, all appropriate services will be available and will be efficient. Unless sufficient resources are made available efficiency will not be achieved. The actions of successive governments have suggested that during the economic climate which can be expected over the next decade these resources should not be supplied unless their costs can be met by the client or customer. The Committee has a sympathy with this attitude but would not wish to see it applied at the expense of loss of service to clients or the public. In this regard the Committee was faced with a difficulty regarding the selling price of publications, namely, should publications be readily available to the public at a price subsidised by the AGPS or should they be available on a 'user pays' principle. A similar decision was required with regard to the production of publications. In both cases the Committee has opted for a solution on the basis of a 'user pays' principle. The Committee is of the opinion that this attitude would make client departments more responsible in their publishing programs, and, because AGPS operations will be self-sufficient production delays which have caused so much concern to departmental clients will be reduced considerably. So far as the public is concerned, built-in flexibility in pricing should ensure that the public is not overburdened by high prices for publications.

5.11 However, the Committee is aware that in the absence of statutory provisions to the contrary, administratively, the Australian Government Publishing Service is subject to the provisions of the Public Service Act and must comply with Department of Finance Directions in the same way as any other departments. If the Australian Government Publishing Service is transformed into a more commercially viable and financially self-supporting entity, it may be difficult for the Government under its present staffing policy to ease the AGPS staff ceilings.

5.12 The Committee is concerned to ensure that the AGPS receives the support necessary to achieve the aims originally sought by the Erwin Committee. It feels that by making AGPS more commercially viable, the Government may be able to see its way clear to provide the support and ease of procedures appropriate to the commercial operations sought and referred to from time to time in the Committee's Report. If the employment of further staff can be economically justified then, staff ceilings not withstanding, this should be the case. Should this not be possible under existing legislative provisions, the Committee reluctantly suggests that statutory support be given to establish AGPS responsibilities in much the same way as given to the Australian Bureau of Statistics under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* or the National Library of Australia under the *National Library Act 1960*.

5.13 Wherever it is acknowledged that, due to their expertise, the Publishing Branch or the Government Printer is the most appropriate body to perform a particular function of government, for example, supervision of departmental in-house printing requirements, the Committee will recommend that the expenses which might arise from this service should be reimbursed from Consolidated Revenue and not be a charge against a Trust Account.

5.14 The Report will cover a general review, the role and functions of the AGPS and author bodies in the general field of printing and publishing. It will discuss the need for and recommend the establishment of a Charter² of Responsibilities for all parties involved in Commonwealth printing and publishing. To ensure that the responsibilities are adhered to the Committee sees itself playing a larger and more consistent supervisory role. To assist in this task it recommends the establishment of a Board of Review with powers to monitor, report and arbitrate on all matters involving Commonwealth publishing.

² The usage of the term 'Charter' is normally associated with the Crown. It is used throughout this Report since it is the noun most acceptable to the Committee which attracts an appropriate importance and standing to establish responsibilities for the Commonwealth's printing and publishing agents.

PART III—COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

CHAPTER 6—ORIGINS, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Background

6.1 Government Printing Offices are a traditional form of service organisation which are a necessary adjunct to the process of government. As with many comparable countries, the role of the Commonwealth Printing Office in Australia has been modelled on that of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), Stationery Printing Works in England which exists primarily to provide for the printing needs of Westminster and the urgent and confidential requirements of government. The Australian counter-part to HMSO was established along with the Parliamentary building in 1927. The Government Printer fulfilled the normal government printing office functions as well as providing a sales service for Commonwealth publications by mail and through small retail outlets until 1970 when his role was significantly changed with the creation of the Australian Government Publishing Service. The Government Printer was made responsible to the Controller, AGPS for the Printing Branch. Functions previously undertaken such as sales, design, finance and general administration were transferred to new sections and branches of the AGPS.

6.2 Originally the Erwin Committee recommended the establishment of five branches within the AGPS, namely, Administration, Designs, Printing, Programming, and Publications Branches. Following the creation of AGPS this plan was rationalised to a three branch structure, comprising Management Services, Printing, and Publishing Branches in which the functions intended for designs and programming were absorbed into the Publishing Branch. The Publishing Branch was eventually located in a new building a short distance from the Printing Office while Management Services was primarily located in the Printing Office. Recent administrative changes, following the absorption of AGPS into the Department of Administrative Services, have meant that most functions of the Management Services Branch have become part of the administrative responsibility of the Department.

6.3 The Erwin Committee left little doubt concerning its views on the respective roles of the Publishing and Printing Branches:

The publishing role is much wider than the printing task. There must be no suggestion that the publishing section is just an off-shoot of the printing establishment. The printing works should operate solely to carry out the directions of the publishing staff and should be one section within the overall structure of the publishing office.¹

While the Erwin Committee was concerned to see that the Publishing Branch would:

give close attention to the question of the scope and extent of the work that can efficiently be undertaken by the Commonwealth printing works in Canberra,²

it appears that the Publishing Branch of the AGPS has maintained an attitude of superiority to the Printing Branch. While relations between the two appear to have improved over recent years, early attitudes have helped to establish an unfortunate discord between them. Between the two Branches, little attempt has been made to orientate respective staff on the role and operations of each other. This was made painfully obvious to the Committee during a number of Committee hearings, where officers of the Printing Branch and the Publishing Branch differed considerably on major aspects of AGPS operations.

¹ Erwin Committee Report, Para 200.
² Erwin Committee Report, Para 120.

6.4 Over recent years, the Government Printing Office has experienced several large losses within its Trust Account operations. The Committee is aware also that, in certain areas of Printing Office operations, particularly in production control which includes such functions as client liaison, estimating, scheduling, etc., there are elements of inefficiency and lack of co-ordination of its responsibilities which are of concern to Printing Office clients. The Government Printer, Mr Thompson, stated in evidence that he was aware of these problems and had undertaken a review of Printing Office operations with a view to making recommendations aimed at correcting these deficiencies. Mr Thompson went on to say that a major reason for his losses and alleged inefficiency was due to his lack of overall control of Printing Office activities:

I feel that the Government Printer has been hampered greatly in the operation of an organisation such as the Printing Office. He is responsible for the efficient operation of a multi-million dollar concern. He is not responsible in any way for the finance of that multi-million dollar concern. He is not responsible for the input of work into that concern. He is not responsible for the stores which are provided for that concern. All these are the responsibilities of other people.³

my responsibility is to keep that operation as functional as possible.⁴

6.5 The Committee found the reasons for the situation which has developed quite perplexing and difficult to understand, particularly when the Government Printing Office is working to a total trust account concept, where, due to its huge variations in workload caused by Parliamentary sittings, it would appear essential for the Government Printer to have immediate control over all operations to counter these variations. The Committee investigated further and found that on matters of staffing, purchase of paper and general stores, the operation of the Government Printer Trust Account (including general financial and accounts administration), ADP personnel involved in Printing Office operations, industrial relations, etc., the Government Printer has no direct control. These matters are handled within the management services section of the Department of Administrative Services. The Committee was fortunate to receive the advice of three State Government Printers on this matter. All three operate a similar service to their respective Parliaments and governments as the Commonwealth Government Printer, but all three have control over the administrative matters referred to above.

6.6 The Committee can only assume that initially the purpose of removing these responsibilities from the control of the Government Printer was designed for administrative simplicity within the AGPS. In all fairness to those who established the organisational structure of the AGPS, that structure was quite logical in 1970. However, with the staffing constraints which currently apply within the Public Service, and the absorption of the AGPS into the Department of Administrative Services, this situation is far from ideal today. This was brought home to the Committee when Mr Thompson suggested that the Government's legislative program was threatened in recent times by his inability to appoint staff. Where the present arrangements have the potential to adversely affect the services which the Government Printer can supply to Parliament, the Committee feels that it is time for these arrangements to be seriously reconsidered.

The lack of established responsibilities

6.7 As previously described, the role and function of the Commonwealth Government Printer has evolved from those traditionally carried out by HMSO. Westminster customarily passes resolutions at the commencement of each session which establish

³ Evidence, p.246.
⁴ Evidence, p.261.

responsibility for the printing of a number of the principal Parliamentary publications. In the United States of America, the role of the Congressional Printer is declared by the Public Printing and Documents Act 1968, as amended. In Canada, it is laid down by Treasury direction.

6.8 From time to time the Government Printer is mentioned in Commonwealth statutes. For example, section 3 of the *Parliamentary Papers Act 1908* states:

3 (1) When either House of the Parliament or a Committee has ordered a document or evidence to be printed, that House or Committee shall be deemed, unless the contrary intention appears in the order, to have authorized the Government Printer to publish the document or evidence.

(2.) Each House of the Parliament shall be deemed to have authorized the Government Printer to publish the reports of the debates and proceedings in that House.

From this it is assumed that the Government Printer has a responsibility to produce at least part of the Parliamentary printing requirement. Other Acts such as the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901* and the *Rules Publication Act 1903* also refer to the Government Printer, but such references are minor in nature and cannot be thought to lay down a statutory role for the Government Printer.

6.9 Having considered the evidence, the Committee is of the opinion that it is desirable for the responsibilities of the Government Printer to be clearly established and to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to him to enable his responsibilities to be carried out effectively and efficiently. Since efficiency is often determined by the ability to balance receipts with expenditure, the Government Printer should be given complete control over his activities and, therefore, his Office should no longer be a branch of the AGPS. This would enable full financial responsibilities to be allocated to the Government Printer through the operation of the Government Printer Trust Account.

6.10 Since it is the Parliament to which the Government Printer has the greatest responsibility, the Committee would prefer to see the Printer's role established by Resolution of the Parliament. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That at the commencement of each Session of Parliament, a Resolution be agreed to by both Houses of Parliament similar to the following:

That the Government Printer be responsible to the Presiding Officers for the printing of all Parliamentary publications and be provided with the necessary resources to meet Parliamentary printing requirements.

That, at all times, the Government Printer give priority to Parliamentary work.

That the Government Printer carry out such confidential and urgent work of the government as may be determined from time to time.

That the Government Printing Office be made operationally independent of the AGPS and all administrative support necessary for its operation be placed within the responsibility of the Government Printer.

That the Government Printer be administratively responsible to the Secretary of the Department administered by the responsible Minister.

6.11 Further details concerning the Government Printer's responsibility are given at Chapter 18—The Charter of Responsibilities between Commonwealth Printing and Publishing Agents.

CHAPTER 7—FINANCIAL OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Financial position of the Government Printing Office

7.1 The Commonwealth Government Printer carries out his trading operations through a trust account known as the Government Printer Trust Account. It is the aim of the Printer to either balance his receipts with expenditure or to make a marginal profit. Over recent years, a small profit of \$32,975 in 1974-75 was converted to a significant loss of \$1,346,483 in 1975-76, and a loss of \$817,906 in 1976-77. In 1977-78 accounting practices used to determine profit and loss were altered and a profit of \$342,625 was recorded. AGPS advised that had accounting practices of previous years been employed, a loss of \$249,179 would have been recorded. From the evidence received it appears that adequate steps have not been taken to avoid the possible re-occurrence of losses in the future. The Committee considers this to be unsatisfactory and, accordingly, it has devoted much of its attention during the course of the Inquiry to matters which contributed to a potential loss situation, and the means by which this unsatisfactory position can be improved.

Reasons for unsatisfactory financial position

7.2 Two main reasons were given to the Committee in explanation of the unsatisfactory trading position of the Government Printing Office. The first has already been dealt with by the Committee in Chapter 6 of this Report and relates to the inability of the Government Printer to control his staff and financial operations to meet the variations in his workload. The second, which will be dealt with immediately below, is of even more importance, and one on which the Committee has concentrated its attention, namely, the existence of a continuous no work situation which has operated in varying degrees in the factory for a number of years (See statistics at Para 7.16).

7.3 The costs of operating the Government Printing Office are basically fixed and relate to wages, interest on capital loans, depreciation, etc. Its variable costs, in the main, relate to materials. Unlike a commercial printing factory the Government Printer cannot vary fixed costs by reducing labour. Since he is operating to a Trust Account he is unable to subsidise the cost of work and produce at less than cost in an attempt to keep plant occupied.

7.4 In the past, the inflexibility referred to above was not overly important since the factory was running to a satisfactory capacity. However, to meet a growth in the printing demands of Parliament and government generally, the Printing Office considerably expanded its plant capacity in the early 1970s. Little difficulty was experienced in operating the plant at a satisfactory level until the budgetary restriction of 1975-76 began to take effect. In addition, the political events leading to the double dissolution in 1975 effected the ability of departments to commit funds for printing. These events also meant that the Government's legislative program did not proceed in the normal way. The Printing Office did not receive the necessary quantity of work to keep the plant operating to an economic and satisfactory capacity. Because of the Government Printer's fixed cost situation, the only possible result was a loss on trust account operations. The lack of work situation had a deleterious effect on the morale of Printing Office staff.

7.5 Although a 'no work' situation still exists at the Printing Office to the extent that the Government Printer is seeking a six per cent increase in staff utilisation, the situation would appear to have improved due to Publishing Branch action in allocating more printing jobs to the Government Printing Office. (As stated in Para 4.3(c) the

Publishing Branch is responsible for the allocation of printing work. This can go to either the Government Printer or a commercial printer. *See also* Para 7.22.) However, the Committee is concerned at the apparent inflexibility of the Publishing Branch to channel the work input into its Printing Branch in sufficient time, at least, to reduce the losses over the two financial years of 1975-76 and 1976-77. In addition, the Committee is not convinced that this *ad hoc* method of remedying the situation is in the best interests of obtaining an efficient utilisation of labour and capital.

7.6 The Government Printing Office has equipment which has been acquired to service the needs of Parliament and the urgent and confidential needs of Government. Essentially, acquisition of plant should only be undertaken with this in mind. It follows that once having acquired this equipment on such a basis it should be worked to economic capacity, wherever possible.

7.7 Evidence taken by the Committee revealed a number of reasons why it is difficult for the Publishing Branch to allocate more work to the Printer. These include the irregular sittings of the Parliament and the varying workload which is necessarily involved (*see* Paras 7.8 and 7.9); the method of calculating the Printer's rate of charging, resulting in charges being considerably higher than the commercial sector (*see* Paras 7.10 to 7.13); and a government directive which lays down the proportion of work to be allocated between the Printing Office and outside printers (*see* Paras 7.15 to 7.19).

7.8 The 'no work' situation, which appears to have become a regular feature of Government Printing Office operations, in many respects can be attributed to the responsibility of the Government Printer to provide the basic printing needs of Parliament, namely, *Hansard*, Bills, Acts and other legislation, as well as *Journals of the Senate, Votes and Proceedings* of the House of Representatives, Notice Papers, etc. When Parliament is sitting, the Printing Office is usually operating three shifts to full capacity. However, in Parliamentary recess periods when the Parliamentary workload all but disappears, the Printing Office reverts to a two shift operation and relies on general printing jobs and some publications to fill the troughs of production.

7.9 The problem is compounded by the fact that departments also tend to slow down their printing requirements in recess. Ideally, to even out the peaks and troughs in production which are a direct effect of Parliamentary sittings, the Printing Office needs a regular core of work of the Commonwealth *Gazette*, *Commonwealth Record* type. Unfortunately, the excess capacity problem is intensified by the need to have back-up facilities for Parliamentary printing to cover any failure in the primary plant. Certainly no commercial firm would experience these difficulties, for, with the flexibility available to them, losses can be reduced by either selling off plant or reducing the labour force. The Government Printer is unable to do either since when Parliament is in session he must have immediate capacity to print its many and various publications.

7.10 Another factor which contributes to the Government Printer's inability economically to utilise his plant capacity is the relatively high printing rates necessarily charged to his client because of factors discussed hereunder. When his prices are higher than commercial printers, clients, including the Publishing Branch, naturally are reluctant to place jobs with the Printer.

7.11 The Government Printing Office rates are currently calculated on a labour component including wages, leave loadings, superannuation, night shift loadings, etc.; a machinery component which includes depreciation and interest on purchase of equipment; and a general component which allows for depreciation of the building,

maintenance, cleaning, etc. The three components are then combined and have added to them a 15 per cent loading to cover non-production labour and services costs, for example, the Government Printer's salary, the cost of office overheads, etc.

7.12 To the casual observer, the Government Printer would appear to be setting his rates on a proper and commercially orientated basis. However, when the machine and labour components are examined more thoroughly it is seen that those components include costs which should properly not be a charge against normal clients. In particular, it appears that Parliament has financially disadvantaged the operations of the Government Printing Office. Higher costs arise from the need to print Parliamentary material and involve the employment of a night shift and the maintenance of back-up facilities. The effects of these requirements were brought out in evidence or submissions to the Committee, as follows:

Where equipment such as Computer Typesetting facilities and Rotary presses has been installed primarily to service the needs of Parliament and the Legislative Program the additional cost factors involved in the 30% penalty loading for night shift workers and the depreciation/interest charges have been added to the general hourly cost rates for this equipment. This has the effect that some of the additional costs have to be borne by other clients where this equipment is used on their work and this affects the competitiveness of the Government Printer compared with commercial suppliers that there is something like \$398,000 a year which is made up from the night increment that we pay our shift workers.

If we work just on the back up equipment which is not often used to full capacity we would be talking about depreciation on that equipment alone being to the value of something like \$72,000 a year and the interest on that equipment being something like \$39,000 a year.¹

Neither of those pieces of equipment (computer typesetting and the back-up rotary press) is of much use in turning out published material for departments because the nature of the work is different and the computer system does not have a very wide range of type faces.²

7.13 The Government Printer also advised the Committee that last financial year interest amounted to \$966,000 while a further \$782,000 was attributable to depreciation. Both of these amounts have a significant Parliamentary component. So far as the Government Printer's primary clients are concerned, namely, the Parliament and the Attorney-General's Department, the user pays principle does not apply in that part of the heavy overhead costs associated with this work has already been charged to other clients, much to their disadvantage. More importantly, because the Government Printer quotes a higher price than commercial firms on many of the jobs offered for quotation, the amount of work forwarded to the Printing Office by the Publishing Branch is significantly smaller than it might otherwise be. To this point the Committee would add that while a job might not be given to the Government Printing Office because it is too expensive, the eventual cost to the Commonwealth of having plant and equipment lying idle must be added to the overall cost of the Commonwealth's publishing program.

7.14 The Government Printer is in a most invidious position. When he is in a no work situation his rates must increase to balance his Trust Account. As they increase he will receive less work, forcing up his rates even higher. This can only result in further Trust Account losses. The Committee was advised that in May 1977 a submission was prepared for Ministerial approval with a view to rationalising the apparent anomalies involved in the Printing Office's rate of charging. This approval was not forthcoming. The Committee is concerned that the Commonwealth Government Printer's rate of charging is calculated by including components which, in its view,

¹ Evidence, p. 251, 250.

² Evidence, p. 251.

should not be included and which, therefore, seriously affect his ability to compete with his private enterprise counterparts, and recommends:

That all factors involved in calculating the rates of charge used by the Government Printer be reviewed after taking into consideration the practices followed by State Government Printers, commercial printers and Government Printers of comparable overseas countries with a view to ensuring that a 'user pays' principle is instituted.

7.15 In 1968 the then Treasurer, the Rt. Hon. W. McMahon, presented a submission to Cabinet recommending the establishment of the Australian Government Publishing Service. In the submission, which was subsequently approved by Cabinet, certain suggestions were made concerning the proportion of work to flow to the private sector and the Government Printer. These suggestions were accepted by the Publishing Branch as Government policy and, in the absence of clarification or amendment have been followed ever since. At the time, it was estimated that approximately 70 per cent of the Commonwealth's total printing requirement, then estimated at approximately \$20m (including printing for statutory authorities) was produced by the commercial printing industry. Most of the remaining 30 per cent was handled by the Commonwealth Government Printer, with a small proportion going to State Government Printers. Mr McMahon's statement said that there would be no change in the existing policy which ensured that a substantial proportion of the Commonwealth's printing requirement would remain with commercial printers.

7.16 The Committee can understand the interpretation placed on Mr McMahon's statement as policy and that in the absence of any amendment it is not surprised that it should be so treated. Moreover, the Committee believes that as the statement was made in relatively buoyant times in Commonwealth printing and publishing it was understandable that no query arose before the financial year 1974-75. Why it went unquestioned after that date, when the Government Printing Office was suffering a serious production slump, remains a mystery to the Committee. This is not to suggest that the private sector should have been totally starved of work in order to relieve the financial situation of the Government Printing Office. However, a degree of rationalisation in work allocations between the Printing Office and the commercial sector would have been the most practical and obvious course to follow. The extent of the 'no work' situation is indicated by the following figures which were provided to the Committee.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
Summary of Work Statistics 1974-1978

Period	Average operative staff	Overtime hours	No work hours	No work—approx. staff equivalent
July-December 1974	691	56,798	2,474	2
January-June 1975	742	46,554	7,607	7
July-December 1975	749	34,679	14,006	14
January-June 1976	723	21,421	18,290	18
July-December 1976	755	21,523	22,396	22
January-June 1977	726	33,361	8,533	8
July-December 1977	744	32,927	9,306	9
January-June 1978	749	29,339	10,312	10

The 'no work' figures are an indication that, for the time so classified, an employee in a particular section had 'no work' to carry on with. Time spent waiting for materials or instructions is charged to other codes but 'no work' time could be recorded even if there were a bank-up of work in other sections of the factory. They indicate that over the past eighteen months the number of 'no work' hours has dropped back to roughly

the time of 8 to 10 employees. While not ideal, this is not large in relation to a staff of about 740 spread over a number of plants. Conversely, there is a human tendency for staff not to record formally the hours which they spend idle. The figures taken over a period are useful in disclosing trends but nevertheless, while not reflecting in any way on the individual employees, the Committee has doubts whether they represent a true estimate of non-productive time.

7.17 Two further points are of interest. The policy of a fixed proportion of work going to the private sector was followed by HMSO at one time but has since been discontinued. Mr McMahon's original submission stated that existing policy was based on providing facilities within the Government Printing Office to enable the requirements of Parliament and the urgent and confidential needs of departments to be undertaken. Beyond that, the Government Printer should be provided with sufficient work to enable his facilities to be used efficiently. The Committee suggests that when healthy publishing workloads are available the two parts of the statement are relatively consistent except that in buoyant publishing periods a far greater proportion of the workload would go to the private sector since it can be assumed that the Government Printing Office would be running to full plant capacity. In lean publishing times, however, they would be inconsistent, as the Government Printer, being a vastly smaller unit than the combined commercial sector, is unable to adapt readily to the situation because of large fixed overheads and would be the most adversely affected.

7.18 The Committee adds that it is most difficult to adhere to a set allocation of work as the amount of input from statutory authorities is impossible to estimate. In 1976-77 and 1977-78, from the figures available to the Committee, approximately 27 and 29 per cent, respectively, of the total Commonwealth printing and publishing workload in those years went to the Government Printing Office, that is, less than one third of total Commonwealth printing. Therefore it cannot be suggested that the public sector has been receiving more than its fair share of the available work when slump conditions have applied in the industry (see Appendix VI—Printing Work Handled by the AGPS 1971-72 to 1977-78).

7.19 From the evidence received the Committee can only conclude that the one-third/two-third policy serves no useful purpose, and, in addition, the set proportions are most difficult to adhere to. Consistent with the theme expressed throughout this Report a degree of flexibility and commonsense should prevail in this most fluctuating industry. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That the policy of allocating a fixed proportion of printing and publishing work to the public and private sectors be discontinued.

Provision of consistent work

7.20 To the Committee it is clear that at the heart of the matter of losses registered by the Government Printer Trust Account is the 'no work' problem. It can only effectively be remedied by channelling a consistent flow of appropriate work to the Government Printing Office when Parliament is in recess. In this regard one of the greatest difficulties being experienced by the Government Printer is his inability to control the intake of work into his Office. For this, he is totally dependent upon the Parliamentary workload, work allocated by the Publishing Branch, general printing work up to \$5,000 in value which may be lodged direct by departments, and some general printing and publications work which may be provided by statutory authorities from time to time. The Government Printer has no control over the input of this work, neither its extent nor its timing. While Parliament traditionally places its work

with the Government Printer it is not required to do so in all cases and quite frequently its reports are placed with commercial printers by the Publishing Branch. The only requirement for work to be directed to his Office is laid down in AGPS Circular No. 26, which states:

departments are required, in the case of all such jobs general printing over \$500 in value, to establish whether they could be accepted by the appropriate Government Printing Unit before taking action to place them with private printers. Departments may place jobs estimated to cost less than \$500 either with the Government Printer's plants or with commercial printers.

General printing jobs estimated to cost in excess of \$5,000 are placed by the Publishing Branch. All too frequently, a department will approach the Printing Office to undertake a general printing job valued between \$500 and \$5,000 and find that his plant is running to capacity due to Parliamentary sittings and, accordingly, the job is placed with a commercial printer. On the next occasion that the department requires a general printing job to be undertaken, it often decides not to approach the Government Printer and forwards its work direct to a commercial printer. The requirement provision would appear to be either unenforceable or is not enforced.

7.21 A suggestion was put to the Committee by both the Government Printer and the former Government Printer that publications and general printing print procurement for departments should be arranged by the Government Printing Office rather than the Publishing Branch. An examination of State and overseas practices indicated that print procurement was the responsibility of the equivalent of the Commonwealth Government Printer. The Committee thoroughly examined its witnesses in this regard. The results of this examination are included in this Chapter rather than that which deals with the Publishing Branch (which currently holds this responsibility) since the ability to control work intake appears to be the key to much of the Government Printer's 'no work' problem.

Print procurement

7.22 All print procurement for the Commonwealth is undertaken in accordance with Finance Directions. Currently, the AGPS draws a distinction between the print procurement arrangements for the categories of publications, and general printing. Basically, departments which seek to arrange for both general printing and the printing of their publications are required to use the services of the Publishing Branch, although they are able to make their own arrangements for general printing jobs under \$500 in value. For general printing jobs estimated to cost between \$500 and \$5,000 departments are required to establish whether such jobs could be accepted by the Government Printer and, if not, printing may be arranged through commercial printers. Where a general printing job is estimated to cost in excess of \$5,000 or the job is the printing of a publication, printing is arranged by the Publishing Branch by either calling public tenders or directing the job through a period contractor. The latter arrangement enables AGPS to avoid following normal quotation or tender arrangements by placing the job with a contractor who, under a previous tender arrangement, has been awarded a general contract for particular categories of work, for example, B5 bookwork and A4 jobwork contracts. The time savings of this procedure can be considerable. Statutory authorities may arrange their printing requirements through the AGPS but are not required to use its services except on those occasions where a report is required to be produced under a statutory direction. Occasionally, this requirement is not met.

7.23 The advantages of a central authority arranging the printing requirements of departments are numerous. Essentially, it enables the preparation of standardised specifications. These, together with contracts and printing orders, are written by

officers well versed in the terms and technicalities of the printing industry. Many problems are therefore avoided at the commencement of the job. The AGPS, as the central print procurement authority, maintains comprehensive details on:

. . . 621 potential suppliers, with regard to structure of company, lists of equipment and condition, specialisation, etc. Inspections of facilities are made by qualified officers at the time of initial registration, and later as changes in equipment, etc. dictate. This knowledge enables AGPS to select suitable suppliers for invitations to quote and tender for the 78 categories of work it orders, and to recommend the best supplier when awarding a contract.¹

7.24 While there are some unwanted side effects which may arise (see Para 10.6), the Committee is satisfied that AGPS achieves greater efficiency through specialisation in the allocation of printing contracts. The existence of a centralised procurement agency should also achieve overall cost savings throughout the Public Service by avoiding duplication of function. This is one of the areas in which the comment of the Erwin Committee is relevant:

Your Committee is confident that the cost of establishing the new office AGPS will be returned to the Commonwealth many times over by means of increased efficiency in administration²

In fact, the Committee was disappointed to note that, due to a lack of staffing resources, print procurement for general printing items has been decentralised by returning partial responsibility to departments.

7.25 Both the Government Printer and the former Government Printer put forceful arguments to the Committee to support the transfer of print procurement responsibility from the Publishing Branch to the Printing Office. In particular, it would enable the Government Printer readily to fill his troughs in production when they occur. The Government Printer stated that while liaison with the Publishing Branch was close, and that as a result of weekly production meetings work was being forwarded to the Printer to ease the 'no work' situation, such procedures did not provide immediate work. To support his case the Government Printer stated:

I see the role very strongly that the Government Printer should have print procurement facilities with him. This is such an immediate requirement that I would see the correct people on day to day basis making a decision: Can we typeset it? Can we do it on time? Can we print it? Can we bind it?³

The Government Printer went on to say that in some areas and on some days or periods there is capacity in many sections of the factory and none in others. A regular flow of work would fill the excess capacity. Where no capacity exists the work could be forwarded to commercial printers.

7.26 In evidence, the First Assistant Secretary responsible for AGPS (Mr Nott) countered the Government Printer's argument by suggesting that the Government Printer would allocate the incoming work according to the one primary objective—how to keep the plant working to full capacity. He suggested that the Publishing Branch is able to take a Commonwealth-wide view, and not one which is based on ensuring that the Government Printing Office fully employs its personnel and maintains an economic operation of its equipment. The fear was expressed that the publishing requirements of the client would suffer as a result.

7.27 Arguments and counter arguments were put to the Committee in some detail. However, in summary, most witnesses who had a responsibility in the matter of print procurement seemed to hold opinions which corresponded with their respective roles and interests in printing and publishing. Senior officers of the AGPS went so far as to lay down reasons why the Government Printer should not and could not handle print

¹ Evidence, p. 13

² Erwin Committee Report, Para 196.

³ Evidence, p. 245.

procurement. The Committee finds difficulty in accepting that proposition when one considers State and overseas experience. The Committee is satisfied that the Government Printer has the capacity and experience to accept the responsibility. However, in the case of publications, the Committee refers to its definition of publishing. If the AGPS, through the Publishing Branch, is to remain the government's publisher, it must have control of the manuscript from initial receipt until final copies are distributed to the user. The Committee feels that too much double handling and confusion of roles and functions would occur if the responsibility for publication print procurement was given to the Government Printer. Publishing is a specialist role and due mainly to the implementation of the Erwin Committee recommendations Australia has become a world leader in government publishing. To tamper with the publishing concept of Erwin for the purpose of alleviating a 'no work' problem at the Government Printing Office would be a backward step.

7.28 However, in the field of general printing the Committee considers that print procurement could be most effectively handled by the Government Printer. It would provide a steady stream of work to the Printing Office which would alleviate many of the troughs of production which arise in the absence of Parliamentary sittings. By having responsibility for general printing the Government Printer would be able to liaise with departments to encourage them to place work with him to correspond with production troughs. More economic long run production jobs could also be scheduled. Work which could not be handled by the Government Printer would be contracted to commercial printers. The Committee is satisfied that little, if any, duplication of responsibilities between the Publishing Branch and the Government Printing Office would occur, although there would be a need to transfer some staffing resources from the Publishing Branch to the Government Printing Office. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That responsibility for print procurement of general printing needs of departments estimated to cost more than \$500 become the responsibility of the Government Printer. (responsibility for arranging the printing of items estimated to cost less than \$500 to remain with the originating department).

7.29 A significant production trough can exist in the photo-typesetting area. The Committee believes that this situation will be eased by the additional flow of typesetting work to the Government Printing Office when the Government Printer gains the full responsibility for completing the Parliamentary Papers Series. Hopefully, further work will flow from the steady production of Commonwealth legislation which can be expected to occur if the Committee's recommendations in its Fifth Special Report are accepted.⁴

7.30 However, there will be a continuing need in the foreseeable future to allocate material requiring typesetting to the Printing Office to maintain a reasonable work load in that area. To this end, regular consultation should continue to ensure that appropriate work levels are achieved. The Committee would also expect the Government Printer to test his competitiveness by tendering for jobs from the Publishing Branch. For reasons of convenience and economy, and to assist in the initial stages of the implementation of a Parliamentary information retrieval system (see Para 21.2), wherever possible, these allocations should be publications which are likely to be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series.

⁴ Australia, Parliament, *Publication of Commonwealth Acts, Statutory Rules and Legislation of the Territories*, Report from the Joint Committee on Publications (Chairman: J. C. Hodges), Part, Paper 23 (Canberra 1978), Para 16.

7.31 The Committee is concerned that the procedures by which print procurement is arranged are complicated, tedious and in some cases, unnecessary. Printing and publishing are two facets of a specialised and unique industry. Procedures for print procurement should be especially prepared with this factor in mind. The frequency with which tenders for jobs need to be let suggests that a special set of procedures and tendering arrangements should apply. An example is the period contract which should enable a simplification of procedures and a lessening of time taken to arrange printing. This is not to say that safeguards should not be provided as the dangers of loose tendering arrangements are too obvious to need stating. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That officers from the Publishing Branch, AGPS, the Government Printing Office, and the Department of Finance review the procedures by which procurement of government printing is achieved, including the possibility of reducing the time taken to allocate printing contracts: such review should include consultations with the Auditor-General and give consideration to the practices of the States and comparable overseas countries.

7.32 The Committee is aware that occasions will arise where departments will have a need to by-pass the procedures required to obtain general printing. In such instances certificates of in expediency can be issued. Should the need continue a permanent arrangement should be sought from the Board of Review.

Purchase of equipment

7.33 In evidence, on a number of occasions, it was suggested that the Government Printing Office was overcapitalised: that its capacity was greater than that required to provide the printing requirements for Parliament and the urgent and confidential needs of government. However the Committee recognises that it has other functions. Some criticism arises when commercial printers with light workloads observe jobs not specifically related to the existence of the Government Printer going to him to maintain his capacity at a satisfactory level. However, it must also be taken into consideration that the Government Printer has to allow a small capacity in most production processes to ensure that at all times government requirements can be met when commercial firms are either unable or do not wish to undertake a particular line of work.

7.34 The Committee recommends:

That a review of Government Printing Office plant capacity and equipment be undertaken to ensure that capital equipment employed by the Government Printer is not excessive and is basically directed towards meeting the printing requirements of Parliament and the urgent and confidential printing needs of the Government.

That the equipment employed in the Government Printing Office be examined to ensure that it is the most efficient and economic equipment available to fulfil its intended purpose.

That, before the Government Printing Office undertakes any significant expansion of its printing plant, approval be obtained from the responsible Minister after consultation with the Board of Review.

7.35 Having established and subsequently installed the required equipment within the Government Printing Office, the Committee recommends:

That the Government Printing Office, wherever possible, operate its plant and associated personnel in such a way as to achieve the most effective utilisation of these resources.

CHAPTER 8—FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Payment of Accounts

8.1 Throughout its Inquiry, the Committee received a number of complaints concerning late payment of accounts, either intra-government or to the commercial printing sector. The Committee believes that if given total control of accounts management and the operations of the Government Printer Trust Account, the Government Printer would ensure that improvements in this area would occur. Nevertheless, the methods by which accounts are paid would benefit from the introduction of simplified procedures.

8.2 Currently, when the Government Printer receives a general printing or publications job from a department or a statutory authority for completion, the Government Printer levies the author body with the agreed charge and payment is made direct to the Government Printer Trust Account. This is a straightforward simple transaction and the Committee agrees with its continuance.

8.3 Where a job is lodged by the Publishing Branch with the Government Printing Office for printing, payment is made after completion of the job and after verification by the Publishing Branch that the job has been produced to a satisfactory standard within the stated specifications. The account is lodged with the department to arrange payment direct to the Government Printer.

8.4 For reasons which will be discussed in some detail in the section of the Report dealing with the Publications Trust Account (see Para 11.16), the Committee will be recommending that payment of accounts for jobs which have been directed to the Government Printing Office by the Publishing Branch be made direct to the Government Printer Trust Account through the Publications Trust Account. The Publishing Branch subsequently will recoup that amount, together with any handling charge considered appropriate, from the author department.

8.5 Should the Committee's recommendation concerning the allocation of print procurement responsibility for general printing to the Government Printer be agreed to, the Committee suggests that payment of accounts be undertaken on a more direct basis, and accordingly, recommends:

That, where a department lodges a general printing job with the Government Printer to arrange printing, and which job is subsequently completed by a commercial printer, the account be settled direct to the commercial printer from the Government Printer's Trust Account and that the Government Printer subsequently recoup that amount, together with any handling charge considered appropriate, from the author department.

8.6 The handling charge referred to in this recommendation relates to a small charge which should be levied on departments to cover the Government Printer's overhead involved with procurement, payment of accounts, etc. It should be remembered that if the Government Printer did not carry out this service it would be undertaken by the department at a far greater cost than the suggested handling charge. The Committee recommends:

That the Department of Finance determine an appropriate handling charge for print procurement services provided by the Government Printer.

8.7 The Committee believes that these suggested procedures would produce a simple and efficient system of account processing. It has the advantage of providing almost immediate payment to the commercial printer rather than undertaking the longer process of forwarding the account to the author department for settlement.

The Government Printer Trust Account

8.8 The Government Printer Trust Account is currently administered by the General Services division of the Department of Administrative Services. All receipts and payments pass through the Trust Account including all income, all wages and salaries, superannuation, leave loadings, interest, depreciation, etc. It is a total concept and reflects all financial aspects of Government Printing Office operations.

8.9 Should the recommendations referred to in paragraph 8.5 above be agreed to, the Government Printer's Trust Account will be operating on a 'working account' basis. The Committee emphasises the importance of ensuring that only those items which relate to the operations of the Government Printing Office should pass through the Trust Account. To avoid any possible criticism from the Auditor-General and perhaps outside commercial concerns, all appropriate items should be included, even to the cost of, say, providing an industrial relations officer. However, the Committee considers that responsibilities which are given to the Government Printer and do not have a direct bearing on his operations such as the oversighting of departmental in-house printing facilities should not be included and a subsidy should be provided to cover these extraneous costs.

Senior Management

8.10 During the course of the Inquiry and in this Report, the Committee has not attempted to become involved in specific matters of staffing and administration as it considers these are matters best left to those bodies such as the Public Service Board who may be more expert in such matters. However, the anomalies of the senior staffing structure of the Government Printing Office are too significant to remain unchallenged.

8.11 For some years, the Committee has been concerned with the remuneration paid to the Government Printer in relation to his responsibilities. This point will have even greater validity if the recommendations of the Committee are accepted. The Committee, through its Chairman, has discussed the matter personally with the Chairman of the Public Service Board. It has also been raised in the Adjournment Debate in the House of Representatives.¹ The Chairman and Deputy Chairman, at the request of the Committee, made personal representations to the Minister at the time of departure of the previous Government Printer. The Government Printer is responsible for some 750 personnel and a factory, sub-printeries and document reproduction centres which produced work to the value of \$17.7m. in 1977-78, yet he receives a salary of \$22,700. The Committee points out that this is less than all State Government Printers and is the middle of the negotiable range for the new position of Northern Territory Government Printer (\$21,175-25,569). It is not inappropriate to mention here that the former Government Printer left his position to become State Government Printer for Victoria and thereby gained a salary increase of \$8,000 per annum and certain other benefits. The Committee recommends:

That the remuneration paid to the Government Printer in relation to his responsibilities be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

8.12 The Committee trusts that suitable remuneration will be afforded the Government Printer in the near future to ensure that the person most equipped for the position will continue to be attracted to and hold the office of Commonwealth Government Printer.

¹ House of Representatives Hansard, 24 March 1977, p. 620.

8.13 Another matter of concern to the Committee relates to the desirability of appointing a Deputy Government Printer who would act in the Government Printer's position during his absence. Also there appears to be a lack of an adequate senior structure of officers who could assume the greater responsibilities of outside plants, departmental in-house printing facilities, industrial relations, etc. Should the Committee's recommendation concerning the independent operation of the Government Printing Office be agreed to, the Office will become a self-supporting organisation. The Government Printer should have the freedom to adjust his staff structure to best suit his operations. The proposed self-supporting nature of the Government Printing Office, with a Trust Account which would fully reflect its financial position should ensure a self-enforced discipline on the Government Printer to balance the producers against the non-producers. The Committee recommends:

That urgent consideration be given to the creation of the position of Deputy Government Printer.

8.14 Of related concern to the Committee is its desire to ensure that the close consultation which it believes currently exists between management and the factory floor is maintained. If the desired class of senior management personnel cannot be attracted to the Government Printing Office, the continuation of such liaison might not be guaranteed for the future.

CHAPTER 9—IN-HOUSE PRINTING

Purpose

9.1 Departmental in-house printing facilities have been progressively installed throughout Public Service departments and statutory authorities since the early 1960s. They provide a modern printing capacity to produce quickly high quality printed material. Departments attach great store to having at their immediate disposal a capacity to produce internal circulars, Ministerial papers, stationery and publications of a relatively high standard. The Administrative Review Committee which recently presented its findings to the Government remarked that:

Printing units in agencies have also increased considerably in number, size and capacity and are in some cases attempting to perform large and complex printing tasks which could be more economically done by skilled tradesmen on more suitable equipment. Greater use could be made of period and other special printing contracts developed by AGPS The very existence of in-house printing equipment encourages its use (and thus generates proposals for more and better equipment) when there should be resort to the Government Printer or a commercial printer.

The Committee is also concerned with the growth of departmental capacity and responsibility in this area and, wherever possible, sought evidence on the matter. It made several inspections of departmental facilities. It was also able to draw on views expressed in a review of Departmental in-house printing which has recently been completed by the Public Service Board and the Department of Administrative Services.

Extent

9.2 The establishment of in-house printing facilities and the expansion of their capacity has followed the path of technological development in this field. Including those of statutory authorities, departmental printing units currently employ some 350 full time staff and have an overall labour, materials and overhead cost to the Commonwealth of approximately \$7.6m per annum.

Disadvantages

9.3 There is a significant economic disadvantage in allowing in-house printing units to be operated and expanded in the present manner. Whilst they have a particular capacity to produce efficiently circulars and small run internal documents, all too frequently they are employed in the production of long run stationery or publications of which some are released outside the department. Since most items of in-house equipment are not designed for such work, the comparative costs are far greater to the department than if the work had been undertaken by the Government Printer or a commercial printer. The Committee is also concerned that the printing of publications by this method by-passes AGPS cataloguing, marketing and distribution arrangements: a point which is of considerable concern to the users of Commonwealth publications.

9.4 The existence of the large Defence printing establishments in Brunswick and Bendigo in Victoria where the printing needs for the Department of Defence are largely carried out has been drawn to the attention of the Committee. Reasons given for the existence of these plants are that they provide a general printing and immediate service to the Department in peace time and that in an emergency, or in times of war, the high security needs of the Department can be protected. The Committee observed, and was advised in evidence, that much of the equipment is old and due for replacement. The Committee feels that considerable advantage would be achieved if the Government Printing Office was assigned control of these installations in much the same way as the technical publications unit of the former Postmaster-General's

Department came under its responsibility in 1972. The Government Printer's expertise in the printing area, together with the established need to rationalise general printing requirements was put to great advantage in this instance. Since the Government Printing Office has its own secure area and its personnel have security clearances which could be raised to a higher status, if necessary, it is doubtful that the department's argument against a transfer has any substance.

9.5 The Committee noted that most statutory authorities were not subject to Department of Finance direction and were able to purchase sophisticated plant more or less at will. It is perhaps pertinent to mention that the NCDC, which has been unable to find sufficient work within the Commission to utilise its printing plant, has sought outside work to reach an economic capacity. The Committee is concerned that in such instances the authority is duplicating AGFS functions and is competing with it and commercial printers for work which is currently not available in large quantities. This is not, nor should it be, a function of the NCDC or any other statutory authority.

Control over purchase of equipment

9.6 Procedures governing departmental purchase of printing equipment are incorporated in the Finance Directions. They require AGFS to examine purchasing proposals prior to their approval by the Australian Government Stores and Tender Board. The AGFS responsibility currently is undertaken by the Government Printer who examines the need for the equipment and whether the proposed work can be undertaken by other means, for example, through the Government Printing Office or commercial printers. There are no guidelines laid down as to what type of work should be performed by the equipment.

9.7 In a submission received from the Printing and Kindred Industries Union the following suggestion was put to the Committee:

- (1) Printing units situated in buildings occupied by Government Departments and/or Instrumentalities should be staffed and operated by the Government Printer.
- (2) The advantages that would accrue from acceptance of the above submission are the following:
 - (a) Availability of greater technical knowledge;
 - (b) More flexibility in availability of plant, equipment and operators;
 - (c) Back-up and interchangeability of staff;
 - (d) More economical operation due to the Government Printer's ability to have work performed in the most appropriate place or method as well as access to a larger source of volume of work;
 - (e) Better training facilities;
 - (f) Availability of larger variety of stocks;
 - (g) Economic savings made by centralisation of intensive capital services.
- (3) The only disadvantage may be an alleged loss of direct control and priority which could be prevented by initial agreement between the Government Printer and the Departments.

9.8 While the Committee does not support fully the suggestion as submitted by the PKIU there are certain elements of it which are attractive. The Committee recognises a departmental need for instant printing facilities for the production of some internal material. However, it does not concede the need for departments to operate independent machinery when other facilities with appropriate capacities are available, either commercially or through the Government Printer. For instance, the Committee was informed that two Melbourne based departments operate separate in-house plants within the same building. Neither does the Committee consider that these facilities should be utilized for long run printing and stationery items nor for the production of high quality finished publications. In this regard, the Committee is interested to find that its conclusions are similar to those of the Administrative Review Committee previously referred to in paragraph 9.1. The review estimated that some 75-85 per cent of publications and forms style material could be diverted to more suitable government

or commercial production without overly inconveniencing departments. If this were achieved, estimated overall savings would be approximately \$2.5m or some 33 per cent of the total cost of departmental in-house operations.

9.9 The Committee recommends:

That the Government Printer prepare guidelines:

- (a) *to cover the type of work which should be undertaken by departmental in-house printing facilities;*
- (b) *along the lines suggested in paragraph 9.8 of this Report; and*
- (c) *submit them to the Board of Review and to the responsible Minister for their respective approvals.*

That departmental submissions requesting the purchase of in-house printing equipment be examined by the Government Printer prior to their consideration by the Australian Government Stores and Tender Board to ensure that such requests are consistent with the in-house printing equipment guidelines; and that within any such examination the Government Printer ensure that existing departmental facilities are in accordance with the in-house printing equipment guidelines.

That, wherever statutory provisions permit, prior to purchase of printing equipment, statutory authorities consult with the Government Printer to determine appropriate equipment which would meet their printing requirements.

That, in the event of the Government Printer and a department or statutory authority failing to reach agreement on in-house printing requirements, the matter be forwarded to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action.

That consideration be given to assigning the responsibility for the Defence printing establishments at Brunswick and Bendigo in Victoria to the Government Printer.

PART IV
PUBLISHING BRANCH, AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
PUBLISHING SERVICE

CHAPTER 10—THE ERWIN CONCEPT

The Government Publisher

10.1 It is the Publishing Branch of the AGPS which has been charged with the responsibility of carrying out the primary recommendations of the Erwin Committee, namely:

That a central government publishing office be established to undertake the publishing function of departments.

That the publishing office be the sole publisher of all departmental publications.¹

10.2 The Publishing Branch was fully established in mid-1970. To carry out its publishing function, it was divided into three primary sections, namely, Client Service and Print Procurement; Publishing Standards, and Design; and Sales and Distribution. A fourth function not directly associated with the publishing role was also attached to the Branch, namely, the *Gazette* Office and Ministerial Document Section.

10.3 The improvements which this Branch has achieved in the field of Commonwealth publishing are considerable and have been detailed at paragraph 4.6 of this Report. However, a balanced assessment of its operations cannot be made without looking at its weaknesses. From the evidence received by the Committee and various discussions with the personnel involved, the Committee is concerned that there are a number of factors presently operating within the Publishing Branch which significantly detract from its many advantages and successes.

10.4 Leaving aside the balances of its various trust accounts, the cost of AGPS administrative operations has risen from \$858,160 in 1970-71 to an estimated \$3,886,479² in 1977-78 of which \$393,331 and \$1,633,603 represent the respective salaries for those years. The Committee does not question the need for the existence of the AGPS but is concerned to achieve a reduction in the overall cost of providing its services to government and the people.

10.5 In many respects AGPS has carried out its operations with what the Committee would consider to be an excessive attraction to bureaucratic procedures. Most complaints about its operations received from departments reflect the lack of AGPS flexibility and suggest that AGPS has become too bureaucratic in nature and has begun to stray from the service nature of its operations. The initial statement establishing AGPS given by the then Treasurer, the Rt. Hon. William McMahon, set out the government's intention in this regard:

the Government wishes to emphasise the service function which will be undertaken by the new organisation.³

The Treasury Circular (1969/16) advising all Permanent Heads of the establishment of AGPS stated:

When the new organisation is fully operational departments will have access to a wider range of services . . .

Unfortunately, the services provided by AGPS have begun to be viewed by many departments as being authoritative directions rather than personalised assistance to fulfil departmental publishing programs.

10.6 The Committee was provided with examples of strained relations between the AGPS and departments which adversely affect the service image of AGPS operations:

This [AGPS achievements] has not been achieved without some disagreements and disenchantments. There have been frequent delays at all stages of production, and on a number of occasions the AGPS has shown insensitivity to particular requirements of the Department.

These policies [additional responsibilities given to AGPS through government decision] may in the short-term be relevant to economy and restraint in Government activities but ignore other considerations such as the degree to which they may conflict with a Department's right to determine its own policies on the need for and method of dissemination of information.⁴

There were problems at the commencement of AGPS operations which caused delays, and there were cases of poor quality work by printers to whom contracts were let. Initially the staffing establishment was inadequate for the work volume, and insufficient staff were available with the skills and knowledge necessary in the printing and publishing field. Quality of work accepted back from printers in the early stages of AGPS operations on a number of occasions was less than desirable. These early problems have now largely been resolved: procedures have been made highly efficient as experience has been gained, relations with client departments and the industry have improved and staff shortages both in numbers and quality largely have been overcome. Also, the Service now can apply sanctions on printers regarding quality of work and printing deadlines, a practise which previously departments were unable to enforce satisfactorily. In addition, AGPS now has a more complete picture of the Australian printing industry and what it can offer than any single department had in the past.

Particular complaints made by departments were followed up by the Committee with AGPS. The latter's records showing the dates of the various stages in the handling of these particular jobs, revealed in many cases the main faults to be with the departments, e.g. extensive editorial changes to proofs, undue delay before return of proofs, delays in providing financial authority, inadequate specifications and poor design.⁵

10.7 While the current Committee would still tend to agree with the sentiments expressed by the Committee in 1972, it is painfully aware that the bickering between departments and the AGPS continues to occur. The Committee considers that the basic reasons for this lie in the constant stream of criticism which was directed at the AGPS in its early years of operations, partly because the creation of the AGPS had removed an element of departmental freedom and partly because the AGPS was not totally prepared or equipped to handle the explosion in the growth of Commonwealth publishing which occurred after 1970. It has too readily taken on new tasks given to it by government before becoming proficient in its original responsibilities. The end result has been that the AGPS has become defensive in its outlook and would prefer to offer reasons why a particular innovation cannot be achieved, e.g. staff ceilings, rather than seek out other means of accomplishing the task. The dynamism produced by the AGPS in its early days of operation has diminished. Examples are:

- Failure to become involved with its clients in direct discussions at a senior level to explain and negotiate over areas of mutual concern.
- Failure to ease its procedures either internally or through the Department of Finance relating to print procurement and payment of accounts despite the fact that this is the major area of complaint by the AGPS clients and contract printers.
- Failure by management to resolve internal differences and jealousies between the Publishing Branch and the Printing Branch and to integrate their respective activities.
- The establishment and enforcement of procedures which are often inflexible to the general publishing needs of departments.

¹ Erwin Committee Report, op. cit. Summary of Recommendations, Nos 1, 2.

² Includes \$951,009 for the cost of producing the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette.

³ House of Representatives, *Hansard* 21 September 1968, p. 3122.

⁴ Department of Education submission, Evidence p.173.

⁵ Australia, Parliament, *Departmental Publishing Activities, Report from the Joint Committee on Publications* (Chairman: Hon. G. D. Erwin), Part, Paper 285 (Canberra 1972), Paras 99, 100.

10.8 Perhaps the most obvious area of disagreement between the AGPS and departments relates to the allocation of additional responsibilities to the AGPS by the Government concerning approvals for departmental publishing programs and the control of free issue of publications. These have led the First Assistant Secretary in charge of AGPS, Mr P. A. Nott, to suggest:

This really means, I suppose, that we are becoming partly a regulatory authority rather than just a common service authority. That is very much a two-edged sword. It is not something we enjoy doing. It does not make us more popular with our clients, but it has to be done and we believe that we are doing it reasonably effectively and with minimum upset to clients.⁴

10.9 While the Committee agrees that the AGPS is the proper body to establish publishing and free issue guidelines, it does not agree that it should be the regulator or the overseer of such matters. The processes involved in policing such matters are often lengthy and bureaucratically expensive. In addition, the guidelines established at the request of the Government do not have the necessary elements of flexibility to cater for the differing responsibilities and needs of departments.

10.10 The Committee believes that many of the difficulties being experienced by the AGPS relate to the lack of clearly established responsibilities between the AGPS and its clients. Neither is totally sure of what one another's responsibilities are, and, in the case of the AGPS, the extent and legitimacy of its authority. In Chapter 18 and throughout this Report, the Committee seeks to remove this deficiency.

CHAPTER 11—CLIENT SERVICE AND PRINT PROCUREMENT

Responsibilities

11.1 The basic aims of the Client Service and Print Procurement section are to:

- (a) liaise with clients concerning their publishing requirements, advise on alternative methods and costs and ensure effective and economical completion of each publication;
- (b) prepare clear and accurate specifications of requirements as a basis for arranging contracts;
- (c) place printing jobs where they will be done expeditiously and economically; and
- (d) ensure that printing contracts are efficiently carried out.

Client Service Officers

11.2 The successful operation of the Australian Government Publishing Service depends, above all, on mutual trust and respect between the Service and its client departments. In this the AGPS client service officers, by daily contact with departmental liaison officers, play a vital role.⁵

11.3 There are currently some seventeen positions of client service officer and one senior client service officer. These positions attract salaries of Class 6 and Class 7, respectively, in the middle order of the Third Division of the Public Service. They offer a service to the twenty-nine departments and their agencies, as well as those statutory authorities who choose to use the AGPS. These officers have a very complex role. They provide a direct liaison service with the client, offering advice on such matters as standards, possible methods of production, arranging the printing of the document and liaising between the client and the printer. They are also initially responsible for applying the standards set by AGPS Circulars and the Style Manual, a task which frequently places them at a disadvantage when they are required to discuss, inform and convince senior officers of a client department that a particular standard of a document or its free issue does not conform with AGPS guidelines. Frequently they must go to their senior officers to seek their support where negotiations become protracted or sufficiently intense. The fact that, in these discussions, lines of responsibility between AGPS and its client are unclear places the client service officer at a further disadvantage.

11.4 The responsibilities of these officers have become greater following the Government's requested introduction of AGPS Circulars 26 and 27, which require departments to lodge with the AGPS a Ministerially approved publishing program for the forthcoming financial year and lays down guidelines for official and free issue of its publications. The Circulars direct departments to provide details on the content, purpose and target audience, the extent of official and free issue, estimated cost of authorship and cost of production, and whether the publication is likely to be tabled in Parliament. The Committee supports the concept of these Circulars, namely, to ensure that departments undertake an internal cost/benefit analysis of a particular document prior to its production. It also provides the Minister who has the final responsibility for the publishing program of his department with basic information on its cost and extent. This new task involves the client service officer in extended negotiations with his clients on the content and extent of their publishing program.

⁴ Evidence, p. 46.

⁵ Evidence, p. 10.

11.5 The Committee was surprised to discover that there was little attempt by the AGPS to encourage its client service officers or senior officers to go to the client departments and discuss the mutual concerns of departments' publishing programs and the purposes of the AGPS Circulars, particularly when two recent Circulars, namely 26 and 27, have caused so much dissension within the Public Service. As a public relations exercise, the Committee considers this to be an essential element of a service organisation.

Print Procurement

11.6 Under AGPS Circular 26 all departments are required to arrange the publication of their departmental publishing program through the AGPS. It is the Client Service and Print Procurement section of the Publishing Branch which initially undertakes this responsibility before passing it on to sales and distribution. The procedures by which printing is procured and the advantages of centralising this responsibility have already been described at paragraphs 7.23 and 7.24.

11.7 Within the Publishing Branch this is one of the areas which attracts the greatest amount of criticism from AGPS clients. Basically, these criticisms include the inability of the department, under AGPS procedures, to deal directly with the printer who is undertaking the job and the inability to have any say in the selection of that printer. Other areas in which departments expressed dissatisfaction to the Committee concerned extended delays in arranging the procurement of their publication and the need to adhere to AGPS publishing standards. While the Committee would not wish to recommend a specific time span for the procurement of printing, it notes that the Canadian practice is to require print to be procured within four weeks of the receipt of copy. In all cases the Committee can understand departmental jealousies and frustrations in this regard. Nonetheless it supports the basic concept of a central print procurer.

11.8 The Committee, through its Chairman, undertook a physical inspection of the print procurement section and its procedures. Basically these met with satisfaction. However, it is of concern that more period contracts are not being arranged to cater more fully for the various types of publication. Currently there are two, namely, the B.5 contract and the typeset photographic copy contract. In the Committee's opinion there should be more. Also it appears that full advantage of the benefits of period contracts are not taken since jobs let by this method pass through the same areas of the section as those which are required to complete the full tendering process. Surely the ease of processing procedures which should apply when letting jobs under a period contract should enable a speedier lead time to be achieved.

11.9 The Committee is also concerned that the application of Finance Directions, on occasions, can result in delays in print procurement. For example, jobs estimated to cost in excess of \$5,000 are required to be let by public tender. In an area where all too often publishing requirements are immediate and where some many hundreds of printing jobs are let each year it appears odd to the Committee that print procurement Finance Directions are essentially those which apply for other Commonwealth purchases, for example, machinery, motor vehicles, etc.

11.10 As stated in previous paragraphs however, AGPS inflexibility, both in the application of its standards and its ability to meet the differing needs of departments, was of concern to the Committee. The Committee recommends:

That the procedures by which printing is procured be reviewed to reduce the time taken to allocate printing contracts.

That AGPS consult with the client department in relation to the print procurement process prior to the selection of a printer, and where practicable permit direct contact between the client department and that printer, but that AGPS retain final authority in these matters.

11.11 Where direct discussion takes place between printer and AGPS client it must be made clear to the printer that any alteration to the printing contract will not be accepted without AGPS authority. Once given the departmental manuscript, the AGPS must continue to exercise control over its publication.

11.12 The Committee is aware that some departments have built up a specialist store of knowledge and are more than capable of arranging their own print procurement. In some cases, because of the particular needs of these departments, for example, some scientific or educational material, the Committee feels it is justifiable for them to undertake their own printing arrangements provided that they adhere to the procedures relating to print procurement and that their publications meet with AGPS publishing standards. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That on appropriate occasions, as determined by the Board of Review, departments may arrange print procurement of their publications.

The Committee suggests that separate arrangements be made only where a department is involved in specialist undertakings for specific publications and not the normal standard publications of the department, for example, its annual report.

11.13 Occasionally, departments will seriously question the authority of the client service officer when applying AGPS standards to a departmental publication or in undertaking other tasks within his responsibility. The Committee has samples of extensive correspondence which provides examples of disagreements occurring in such matters. The Committee considers that these situations should not develop and is aware that when they do they are administratively expensive to resolve. The Committee sees the Board of Review playing an active role in this regard. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That the AGPS advise departments and, where appropriate, statutory authorities of the requirement to adhere to AGPS circulars.

That significant or consistent departures from AGPS circulars by departments and, where relevant, statutory authorities be referred by the AGPS to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action.

That in the event of a disagreement between the AGPS and a client department over the application of AGPS circulars, the view of the department shall prevail, but the AGPS shall refer the matter to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action.

AGPS Circulars

11.14 Currently, twenty-nine AGPS circulars have been issued. Many either update, amend or replace previous circulars. The Committee feels that the practice of issuing circulars in this manner can lead to departmental confusion regarding which AGPS standards and procedures are applicable. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That a consolidation of AGPS circulars be undertaken in a style similar to the Treasury Manual, and that, when amendments are made to a circular, these be forwarded to departments and appropriate statutory authorities in the form of replacement or additional sheets.

Publications Trust Account

11.15 Present procedures for the payment of departmental accounts for printing services appear cumbersome and can lead to considerable delay in the payment of a printer's account. They require simplification and rationalisation. Currently, accounts are lodged by the printer with the AGPS for settlement. The AGPS verifies the account and then passes it on to the client department for direct settlement with the printer. The Committee received evidence that all too frequently departments did not settle their accounts within the time required by normal commercial practice (thirty days). Delays are extensive and have, on occasions, led to commercial firms being seriously embarrassed for funds. The Committee finds this unacceptable.

11.16 At paragraph 5.10 the Committee has recommended that the AGPS become more commercially orientated and be an entity which can justifiably undertake its financial operations. To this end the Committee would see a greater responsibility being placed on the operations of the Publications Trust Account. It would prefer to see the account become a working account in a similar manner to that which has been recommended for the Government Printer's Trust Account. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That when accounts for printing services are received by the AGPS from a contract printer, these be met directly from the Publications Trust Account.

That the AGPS recover contract printers' charges from the client department, together with any charges considered appropriate for arranging print procurement, design and other AGPS services.

That the Department of Finance determine appropriate handling charges for print procurement, design and other services provided by AGPS to its clients.

CHAPTER 12—PUBLISHING STANDARDS AND DESIGN

Responsibilities

12.1 The basic aims of the Publishing Standards and Design section are to:

- (a) ensure that government publications are produced to adequate but not extravagant standards depending on their purpose and importance; and
- (b) provide departments and authorities with a range of design and editorial skills and facilities which would otherwise not be economically available to them.

12.2 Without question, it is this section of the AGPS which has placed the AGPS at the forefront of Commonwealth publishing. From the very start of its existence, with the issue of Treasury Circular G4 (Procedures and Standards for Publications presented to Parliament) through to the issue of the Third Edition of the Commonwealth *Style Manual*, this section has not only achieved the aims that were envisaged by the Erwin Committee, namely:

Your Committee hopes that a fresh and enlightened approach to the format and style of all publications will result from its inquiry. It believes that there should be a determined drive in respect of non-Parliamentary publications to break away from the 'official' approach to their presentation which has cramped their style so often in the past. Each publication should be in a format best suited to its intended function, its contents and potential readers. Though due regard must be had to economy at all times, functional and aesthetic values must not be overlooked.¹

but has standardised and classified the status of each Commonwealth publication to the standard befitting its purpose.

12.3 The issue of regular circulars imposing set standards for Commonwealth publications has established AGPS as an authority for Commonwealth publishing. Departments and statutory authorities look to these circulars or the AGPS for guidance in the formation of their publishing programs. Under a recent Government decision, all Commonwealth departments are encouraged to produce an annual report. The existence of AGPS circulars and the expertise of its officers provide invaluable assistance to departments who need to undertake this new responsibility.

12.4 Currently the AGPS employs 12 design personnel. The extent of their experience and qualifications were described in evidence as follows:

AGPS has attracted and held designers of the highest professional standards. Six of the present staff are Associates of the Industrial Design Institute of Australia, which sets very high standards; five of the present design team and one designer until recently on our staff were named as the designers of award-winning publications in recent years for books they designed either for the AGPS or for other organisations before they joined the AGPS.²

12.5 Unquestionably, the potential exists for the Government to centralise its resources to provide a pool of officers who can provide a specialised service to its clients. Such a pool would avoid the duplication and wasted effort indicated by the following comment:

. . . it is felt that the professional nature of the design services offered by AGPS is not sufficiently recognised by client departments who in some instances have engaged at great expense outside designers whose expertise in the field of designing publications was clearly lacking.³

12.6 The Committee believes that with experience and appropriate administrative action, these officers will be able to adapt to specific departmental responsibilities and tasks and gain a satisfactory understanding of departmental design requirements.

¹ Erwin Committee Report, op. cit., Para 81.

² Evidence, p. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

12.7 While the AGPS employs some 12 designers, Commonwealth departments employ a further 60 officers in this field. Although the Committee recognises that certain departments require officers who are 'in tune' with the theme of departmental attitudes and activities, it believes that the majority of departments can fulfil the design requirements of their publishing program through the AGPS. The Committee is satisfied that duplication and a tendency for departmental officers to become conceptually 'stale' would be reduced considerably by the AGPS design section co-ordinating the activities and needs of departments. The AGPS is the body with the most expertise to provide departments with total design requirements. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That design responsibilities for departmental publishing programs be transferred progressively from departments to the AGPS.

12.8 The Committee is aware that some resistance to this recommendation will be received from departments. It seeks the co-operation of the Public Service Board to achieve this objective whenever requests for additional design positions are sought by departments or departmental reorganisations are being sought. In future inquiries of the Committee into departmental publishing activities the Committee will be carefully considering this aspect of each department's publishing program. The Committee believes that the centralising of responsibility in this field will achieve greater efficiency and overall reductions in staff numbers in the Public Service. Nevertheless, the Committee is sensitive to certain requirements of departments to employ an occasional specialist. The Committee recommends:

That following receipt of departmental requests for additional design staff and prior to the consideration of such requests, the Public Service Board consult with the Board of Review.

That the Board of Review progressively review departmental design requirements to ensure that, wherever possible, the responsibility for these functions are transferred to the AGPS.

12.9 The Committee encourages this section of the AGPS to continue in its endeavours to amend and up-date the standards and procedures of Commonwealth publications. In the past, the Committee has reviewed certain AGPS circulars and approved their creation and enforcement by the AGPS. Occasionally it has been brought to the attention of the Committee that departments and statutory authorities either unknowingly or deliberately have departed from requirements laid down in AGPS Circulars. However, as a result of this Inquiry, the Committee does not believe that it is the task of the AGPS to continue to enforce application to the requirements of its circulars. Within its files, the Committee has examples of correspondence which flow between author bodies and the AGPS. Not only is this process bureaucratically expensive, but it reflects upon the service element of AGPS activities. The AGPS is seen in a regulatory or policeman role which is contrary to the original concept of its creation. The Committee wishes to see this element of AGPS activities removed and has recommended accordingly at paragraph 11.14. In addition, the Committee recommends:

That the AGPS prepare circulars which contain instructions appropriate to the standards and procedures necessary to undertake the publication of Commonwealth publications and that such circulars and alterations thereto be submitted to the Committee for its consideration.

12.10 Since 1970, the AGPS has assumed the responsibility of a limited editorial oversight of documents which are given to it for publishing. This function involves editing the manuscript to ensure that its punctuation, spelling, etc., conform with the

Style Manual and AGPS standards. The Committee considers this to be a valuable service to AGPS clients. Since 1970 this section has also assumed, or been given by government, the responsibility for guidance in matters of copyright and the oversight of material which may prove to be libellous or defamatory. The Committee considers that this is the responsibility of the author department except in matters of copyright, where, under the *Copyright Act 1968*, administrative responsibility rests with the Attorney-General's Department. Whenever a legal question arises involving these aspects, it is the Crown or the author body which will be taken to task, not the AGPS. A recent example of AGPS involvement in such matters related to the publication of an article in the Royal Military College, Duntroon, Historical Journal. In its attempt to influence a department that certain contents of the document were not suitable publishing material, the AGPS was labelled in the press as a censor. The Committee considers that officers of the AGPS should not have been placed in such a position. It has no objection to the AGPS giving informal guidance on such matters but it is strongly of the opinion that the AGPS should not have responsibility for the contents of documents. The lack of clear responsibilities in this matter enables a department or its Minister to abdicate responsibilities or to have them assumed by the AGPS. The Committee recommends:

That the decision to print a publication and its content, including the possibility of a publication containing libellous or defamatory material, be the responsibility of the author department.

CHAPTER 13—SALES AND DISTRIBUTION

Responsibilities

13.1 The basic aims of the Sales and Distribution section are to:

- ensure that Parliamentary and government publications are accessible to those with a special interest in them and to the general public; and
- provide efficient central facilities for the distribution of Parliamentary and government publications by sale and/or free issue.

Sales

13.2 To assist in achieving these aims, the AGPS has been given responsibility for developing and administering uniform policies in regard to the sale and pricing of publications and deciding whether or not a departmental publication should be classified as saleable and be made available through its sales outlets.

13.3 The sales function of the AGPS is undertaken through its Bookshops which are situated in all State capital cities (except Darwin) and Canberra, through mail order sales, the sales of its agents and wholesale sales to commercial retail outlets. The distribution function is undertaken in Canberra by utilising highly mechanised equipment employing specialised staff. The activities of this section are extremely important in the publishing function of AGPS. If sales and distribution to the users of Commonwealth publications are not achieved efficiently and effectively the very great public service input which is necessary to produce the 17,000 or more titles which AGPS makes available to the public is depreciated or even wasted. What is the use of producing a publication that is not readily available to the user?

Extent of Operations

13.4 The trend in sales since the establishment of the AGPS is shown in the following table:

Year	Mail order sales and subscription		Total	Increase over previous year	
	Bookshops				%
	\$	\$	\$	%	
1970-71	55,961	386,034	441,995		
1971-72	90,813	516,382	607,195	37.3	
1972-73	167,004	633,382	800,386	31.8	
1973-74	270,940	650,804	921,744	15.2	
1974-75	619,861	1,532,114	2,201,975	138.9	
1975-76	690,847	1,544,289	2,235,135	1.5	
1976-77	1,001,145	1,957,613	2,958,758	32.4	
1977-78	1,181,439	1,801,713	2,983,152	0.8	

The impact which AGPS has had on improving the accessibility of publications to the public is demonstrated by the fact that in 1969-70 Commonwealth Sub-treasury branches located in the States (the then equivalent of AGPS Bookshops) achieved sales of only \$35,400. (Mail order facilities were not available.)

13.5 AGPS annually distributes some 4 million publications on behalf of clients, including some 500,000 subscriptions. This is achieved by the operation of a central dispatch service combining high speed addressing and wrapping equipment with computer-generated address lists. The Committee was impressed by the sophistication and high speed capacity of this equipment and is aware of the economies and efficiencies which have been achieved by its introduction. It believes that greater centralisation of the departmental distribution function can lead to further economies. This is discussed in more detail at paragraphs 13.46 to 13.50.

13.6 The means by which AGPS achieves the sale and distribution of the publications of its clients are dealt with immediately below. The separate activities which contribute to the total framework of the section are referred to individually.

(a) Bookshops—Their location, extent and effectiveness

13.7 The establishment of AGPS Bookshops has had by far a greater impact on the public than the implementation of any other recommendation of the Erwin Committee. The Bookshops are, literally, the shop window of AGPS activities. The Erwin Committee at paragraph 174 suggested:

To be successful, the Commonwealth bookshops need to be situated as close as possible to the heart of a city. They must be seen by people in business and industry, shoppers, and visitors from the country and overseas. They need to be arranged attractively and conducted efficiently. They must receive their stocks of publications without delay.

In the opinion of this Committee, which is based on inspections conducted throughout the Inquiry, the bookshops in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane meet these criteria. However, the Committee feels that adoption of normal commercial bookshop practice, for example, hours of business, use of credit card facilities, would improve the operation of the Bookshops.

13.8 Usually stocks of publications are delivered the day after release. On other occasions this is not the case. Because of the nature of Commonwealth publications where their topical life is limited and public demand is immediate, delays must not be allowed to occur and every effort must be made to have stocks available without delay. In this regard more use could be made of holding stocks under Parliamentary or government embargo at Bookshops. When authorised for release stocks would be available immediately to the public.

13.9 While the location of Bookshops has been good in most cases, the size of the premises has not always been satisfactory, particularly for storage purposes. As growth in sales takes place and more titles become available, greater space is required. It is necessary to remedy this existing deficiency and to avoid any similar deficiencies arising in the future. Of the other Bookshops in Adelaide, Hobart and Perth, personal experience of individual Committee members suggests that the above comments apply equally to them.

13.10 Bookshop operations began in May 1968 with the opening of premises in Melbourne. Since then Bookshops have been established in all States. Unfortunately, the Bookshop located in the Northern Territory was closed down as a result of Cyclone Tracy (1974) and has not been re-established. An agency of the AGPS currently carries out this task. No indication was given to the Committee that the Bookshop would be re-established. To the Committee this is unsatisfactory. The agency which currently exists is unable to supply the wide range of publications which are available at other Bookshops. The availability of a complete service has become even more important now that the Northern Territory has achieved self-government. The Committee feels that the Northern Territory should not be denied such a facility. Its present isolation from Canberra could only be lessened by the re-establishment of the Bookshop. However, the existence of a Bookshop in Darwin is unlikely to become an economic proposition for some years (if at all) and care is required concerning the adverse financial effects on the Publications Trust Account which its re-establishment would, no doubt, cause. The Committee therefore recommends:

That either the AGPS Bookshop be re-established in Darwin or one of the recommendations relating to paragraph 13.24 be implemented, namely a joint selling facility or the establishment of an agency.

¹ Erwin Committee Report, op. cit. Para 174

13.11 In May 1975 the first regional AGPS Bookshop was opened in the Albury-Wodonga district. Others were planned for Ipswich, Newcastle, Wollongong, Parramatta, Geelong and Launceston. However, financial restrictions in the August 1975 Budget precluded their development. At this stage in the development of AGPS the Committee endorses that decision and suggests that the cost of establishing regional Bookshops would be difficult to justify and could not be recommended by this Committee. The Committee considers that the existence of Bookshops in State capitals (and Canberra) whose sales are supplemented by agents who act on behalf of AGPS, commercial retail outlets, and an efficient mail order service should be sufficient to meet requirements.

13.12 Figures have already been provided at Paragraph 13.4 above which show the overall sales achieved by AGPS Bookshops. In relation to the preceding financial years' sales the percentage sales increases have been 1971-72, 62%; 1972-73, 84%; 1973-74, 62%; 1974-75, 128% (mainly due to the opening of new Bookshops and the re-location of others); 1975-76, 12%; 1976-77, 45%; and 1977-78, 18% (subject to audit).

13.13 In the early years of operation, the trading activities of Bookshops reflected consistent and significant losses due mainly to a lack of public knowledge concerning their existence and location and the extent of the publications available to potential users. However, in recent years the financial position has improved and the public has become more aware of their potential. A comparison of the notional accounts between the years 1975-76 and 1977-78 reveals that in all cases the net loss has been reduced substantially and in the case of Canberra a profit for a Bookshop has occurred for the first time.

13.14 In evidence, the AGPS pointed out that Bookshops are arbitrarily credited with 40 per cent gross profits on sales in the notional profit and loss accounts. The actual profit is 66.66 per cent, the balance of which goes to the Publications Trust Account against wholesaling costs. The 40 per cent rate has been set to correspond with the wholesale discount rate (40 per cent). However, due to the service element provided by the Bookshops individual instances require a service far in excess of that provided by the normal retailer. For example, officers may undertake considerable research to provide up-dated Acts which may be amended many times, but the sales value of which might be only 50c. Accordingly, such a rate may not reflect the true cost. It seems reasonable that a higher gross profit rate should be set to allow for any additional staff costs associated with providing this specialised service. The figures below were supplied to the Committee as an indication of individual Bookshop activities and are used by AGPS only as a guideline for sales performance. However they are useful in assessing the trend in Bookshop activities. As a comparison, HMSO Bookshops operate on a 46 per cent gross profit margin although it is believed that HMSO is currently considering the introduction of a 50 per cent rate. The following table provides the loss or profit for all Bookshops based on a 40 per cent gross profit rate for the financial year 1977-78. A calculation based on a 46 per cent rate is also included which possibly provides a fairer assessment of the actual situation.

AGPS BOOKSHOPS—PROFIT OR LOSSES BASED ON VARYING GROSS PROFIT RATES
1975-76 AND 1977-78

Bookshop	Loss (L)/ Profit (P)	Loss (L)/ Profit (P)	Loss (L)/ Profit (P)
	1975-76 @ 40 per cent	1977-78 @ 40 per cent	1977-78 @ 46 per cent
	\$	\$	\$
Adelaide	31,220(L)	22,742(L)	14,974(L)
Brisbane	22,095(L)	21,149(L)	14,955(L)
Canberra	11,040(L)	10,834(P)	25,069(P)

Bookshop	Loss (L)/ Profit (P)	Loss (L)/ Profit (P)	Loss (L)/ Profit (P)
	1975-76 @ 40 per cent	1977-78 @ 40 per cent	1977-78 @ 46 per cent
	\$	\$	\$
Hobart	21,341(L)	19,764(L)	15,719(L)
Melbourne	7,661(L)	6,841(L)	8,242(P)
Perth	22,789(L)	18,436(L)	11,398(L)
Sydney	44,396(L)	580(L)	15,728(P)
Totals	160,542(L)	78,678(L)	8,007(L)

13.15 The Committee's investigations and the evidence received have convinced it that the Bookshops are providing a most essential service to the community and it does not believe that a loss of \$78,678 for 1977-78 would warrant any curtailment of their activities. Other countries have recognised the difficulty of achieving profitable operations in government bookshops. There are few 'best sellers', staff costs are high and it is necessary for some unprofitable lines to be carried. In addition, the government objective of providing an administratively expensive service to the public is not normally a concern which applies to commercial booksellers.

13.16 Despite apparent Bookshop losses, the Committee points out that Bookshop operations are financed through the Publications Trust Account which has recorded an overall profit since its introduction in 1970. However, the Committee is concerned at the arbitrary way in which the gross profit to sales percentage rate is selected. If AGPS operations are to become more commercial, this rate should more fully reflect the actual position. When the difference between calculations based on a 40 per cent gross profit to sales rate compared to the HMSO 46 per cent rate, (offered to the Committee as a fairer margin) can reduce annual Bookshop losses to \$8,000, a re-examination of the means of fixing this rate is required. Rightly or wrongly, the impression conveyed to the Committee is that wholesaling costs are being subsidized at the expense of the economic viability of the Bookshops. The Committee recommends:

That the method of calculating Bookshop notional profit and loss accounts and items appearing in the Publications Trust Account be reviewed by the AGPS and the Department of Finance with a view to making their accounting procedures more in line with commercial practice and thereby reflecting a more accurate picture of AGPS financial operations.

13.17 The Committee concludes this aspect of Bookshop operations with the following quotation from the Erwin Report:

Your Committee looks forward to the day when a Committee of the Parliament can report in the words of the 1956 House of Commons Select Committee on the Estimates:

'The bookshops discharge with success their primary function of making government publications more widely known and more easily obtainable. In doing so, and in increasing sales of publications which most of necessity be published, they reduce the proportion of the cost of publication which falls on the Exchequer.'

Staffing and Administration

13.18 In all four Bookshops visited by the Committee, it was pleasing to note the courtesy and efficiency of the staff. The evidence and inspections indicated that a constant stream of people are entering the Bookshops either to buy or browse through the publications available. In Melbourne, for example, the average is 150 cash customers

¹ Erwin Committee Report: op. cit. Para 176.

per day. This figure recently went as high as 300 when public interest in the Report of the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry (the Fox Report) was at its height.

13.19 Without going into too much detail, the Committee noted that all Bookshop Managers were concerned over the lack of liaison with Canberra. The Committee was informed that advice was not sought by AGPS from the Bookshop Managers on quantity of stocks required for particular reports the demand for which would vary depending on the degree of interest existing in the different States, but on this point a cross-check with the Canberra Office did not support this statement. The true position probably lies somewhere between the two extremes. Also Managers were not provided with information concerning the likely date of issue of re-prints or the expected date of release of significant reports. Perhaps of greater importance is the fact that since the Bookshops were established only two Managers' training sessions have taken place. With changing personnel constantly occurring, this is unsatisfactory. The Committee was able to witness at first hand the attitude of the public to the staff. Because staff are public servants paid out of taxpayers' funds, customers considered that they should be able to provide a first rate and up-to-date service. When this was not forthcoming officers received what the Committee considered to be unfair personal criticism. The Committee trusts that this situation will be improved by providing AGPS Managers with more information and more frequent training sessions.

13.20 The Committee found the staff to be most hardworking on all occasions and was surprised to note that only three additional staff have been added to total Bookshop establishment since 30 June 1974 despite the fact that annual Bookshop sales have increased by some \$900,000 since that date. From its observations the Committee considers that staff workloads have reached their upper limit. It is aware that illness has occurred due to pressure of work and that it has been necessary to provide temporary assistance from Canberra. However, because of staff ceilings this has not always been possible. A further complaint by Bookshop staff was the lack of a possible career structure within this area of AGPS activity. This often leads to personnel leaving AGPS and taking up alternative employment. Overall experience in the Bookshops decreases accordingly. The Committee recommends:

That a small pool of officers be established within AGPS which can be drawn upon, when necessary, to alleviate staff shortages in Bookshops.

Naturally, the Committee would not suggest that these officers be employed only when necessary, but would expect them to have regular duties which could temporarily cease when required to take up Bookshop activities. The employment of such a pool might also be able to improve the career structure for Bookshop staff.

13.21 AGPS suggested to the Committee that overall profits could be achieved by significant revenue increases at the Bookshops if staff levels were increased. However, due to staff ceilings this has not been possible. The Committee trusts that if AGPS operations are placed on a fully commercial basis in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee, the application of staff ceilings would not apply. In any event, the Committee cannot follow the logic that if it is possible to increase overall Commonwealth revenue by employing more staff, such recruitment should be prevented by the application of staff ceilings. The Committee trusts that the employment of any additional staff would be planned in such a way as to reduce the career structure problem referred to in paragraph 13.20.

Decentralisation of mail order

13.22 In evidence, many users of the Bookshops complained of the absence of a mail order service which could operate from their respective State Bookshops.

Account customers suggested that the service provided would be greatly enhanced if they could ring up their Bookshop and request an item to be sent out by mail to their nominated postal address. Their account could be debited accordingly. Similarly, requests could be made in writing. The Committee has sympathy with this suggestion, particularly when potential customers work or reside some kilometres from the Bookshop and have difficulty in travelling to its location. Lack of sufficient parking space in city areas is also a problem. The Committee believes that sales would increase significantly as a result of such an innovation. Some months ago the Committee approached the Presiding Officers of the Parliament with the suggestion that a mail order system be introduced in Bookshops for Members of Parliament. The Presiding Officers agreed with the Committee's suggestion and took the matter up with the Minister. At the time of writing this Report the suggestion has not been implemented. The Committee recommends:

That a mail order service for Members of Parliament be introduced and operated by AGPS Bookshops, excluding Canberra.

That urgent consideration be given to the feasibility of introducing a mail order service for account customers, operated locally by the staff of AGPS Bookshops.

13.23 The Committee would view with caution any further decentralisation of a mail order service to Bookshops since this could involve a significant increase in administrative costs and charges, for example, processing of accounts, additional storage, etc. Even so it is aware that staff numbers in Bookshops would have to increase and that some staff re-structuring might be necessary should a mail order service be installed within Bookshops. The Committee suggests that any increases undertaken be with a view to reducing staffing problems referred to in paragraph 13.20 above.

Sharing arrangements

13.24 Paragraph 173 of the Erwin Committee Report stated:

It is suggested that the State Governments be invited to use the facilities of the Commonwealth bookshops for the distribution of their own official publications. The New South Wales Government already has an attractive sales outlet for its publications and, through the proposed publishing office, the Commonwealth should utilize fully the facilities which have been offered to it by the New South Wales Government until a Commonwealth bookshop is established in Sydney.

The advantages of such an arrangement are essentially twofold, namely, shared administrative costs, for example, rent, cleaning, etc., and convenience to the customer who would be able to obtain both Commonwealth and State publications at the one location. During 1970-72 a reciprocal selling arrangement operated between the Commonwealth and New South Wales. However, the volume of sales and inquiries was disappointing and the arrangement was terminated by mutual agreement. AGPS has undertaken further investigations into this area, but with no resulting innovations. Reluctantly, the Committee concedes that inconsistent marketing and selling arrangements, as well as variations in staffing structures and conditions, make it difficult for a joint arrangement to operate efficiently and to the satisfaction of the parties concerned. However, the Committee can see no reason why sharing arrangements between separate Commonwealth and State bookshops located within the same building could not be achieved and gain the advantages referred to above. Even a closeness of locations which has recently occurred in South Australia would be an advantage, particularly to the public. The Committee recommends:

That negotiations directed towards establishing shared bookshop facilities between the States and the Commonwealth be undertaken where it is considered that such arrangements would be economically and administratively viable.

That where it is not possible for the AGPS to combine its selling facilities with those of the relevant State bookshops, future decisions on re-location of bookshops should take into account the possibility of establishing Commonwealth and State selling facilities within the same building, or within close proximity to one another.

Commercial orientation

13.25 The Committee is concerned to ensure that Bookshops have a financial and administrative flexibility which is in keeping with its commercial operations. Finance Directions, which by definition are applied to all Public Service departments, are to some extent inhibitive to their efficient commercial operation. While the Committee recognises that financial control is necessary in selling activities of this type, it is also aware that because of the variance in price of sales in any day, say between 5c and \$100.00 in an average volume of 150 sales, some flexibility should be available. Other difficulties relate to regulations concerning the receiving and handling of money, and conditions which apply to opening mail. The Committee recommends:

That the Department of Finance and the AGPS, in consultation with the Auditor-General's Office, examine Finance Directions governing the operation of AGPS Bookshops with a view to introducing procedures more in keeping with the operations of a commercial outlet.

(b) Mail order sales

Growth in activities

13.26 Mail order sales are by far the greatest income earner for the AGPS. It is also the most profitable operation since its centralisation enables economies of scale to operate to advantage. Sales figures are already provided at paragraph 13.4. However, it is interesting to note the percentage increase of previous years' sales since the service was first introduced in 1970. These are 1971-72, 33.4%; 1972-73, 22.6%; 1973-74, 2.6%; 1974-75, 143.1%; 1975-76, 2.4% (decrease); 1976-77, 26.8%; 1977-78, 8.0% (decrease). The consistent increase in sales is encouraging to the Committee and indicates that the public desires to use the service in a continuing and growing fashion, although staff ceilings would appear to be having their effect. Perhaps more importantly it is an indication that the community is becoming more interested in government and the role which it plays in the life of individuals and the community as a whole.

Delay in meeting requests

13.27 Even though mail order sales is AGPS's most profitable venture, it advised the Committee that the section is currently understaffed and as a result operates to an average turnaround time of some thirty-one days. Although the commercial equivalent can be as long or more, the Committee does not believe that such delays should exist in a government service. Delays in AGPS response to correspondence are averaging one month or more, while the time taken for the processing and forwarding of accounts also is not operating to the Committee's satisfaction. The Committee repeats that due to the nature of Commonwealth publications which often are topical only for a limited time, a delay factor of these dimensions must seriously detract from potential sales, and hence revenue, for the AGPS. The Committee is of the opinion that a satisfactory turnaround time is ten working days. The fact that present delays exist causes customers to write and enquire about their requests. The backlog builds up and in itself generates further work for the section thereby increasing delays.

13.28 An examination of the procedures which exist for the processing of mail order sales and resulting accounts indicated that procedures could be modified to advantage, particularly in the application of Finance Directions, where, to some extent in the accounts processing and the provision of credit facilities, the need to adhere to them inhibits the smooth flow of the processing task. While the Committee agrees that it is necessary for financial control to be exercised when financial transactions take place, it does not believe that their total and invariable application is suitable for a government entity attempting to operate in a commercial environment. The Committee recommends:

That a task force of officers be formed to reduce to approximately ten working days:

- (a) the backlog in mail order requests; and*
- (b) the present backlog of correspondence in the mail order section.*

recent reviews which have been made in this area) with a view to recommending an adequate staffing structure to fulfil a ten working day turnaround for mail order sales.

That consultations take place between the AGPS, the Department of Finance and, where appropriate, the Auditor-General's Office, to vary Finance Directions to place mail order sales on a basis more in keeping with a commercial operation, wherever possible.

Decentralisation of operations

13.29 The combination of the growth in mail order sales, the turnaround delays which currently apply and the method of processing requests suggests that the demands placed upon this section have become overburdening, and that the section itself is perhaps too large to operate satisfactorily. Diseconomies of scale appear to be operating when the section is required on some occasions to process as many as 10,000 written requests per month. The Committee anticipates that with decentralised mail order service which operates from Bookshops (if feasible and introduced, paragraph 13.22), together with increasing activities of agents and the extension of commercial retail outlets would ease the workload of the Canberra section and allow it to become more economically functional.

(c) Other outlets

Extent and the value of sales

13.30 Sales of Commonwealth publications are undertaken on behalf of the AGPS by commercial retail outlets who purchase publications on a wholesale basis and by its two agents (located in Albury-Wodonga and Darwin). Sales from these outlets are approximately \$300,000 per annum.

13.31 The Committee was advised that sales through these outlets are a profitable undertaking due to reduced overheads. When questioned why more activity was not occurring in this area AGPS officers advised that insufficient staff resources were available to expand the present operations. In addition, to be effective there was a need for the employment of travelling salesmen who would personally show retailers AGPS publications, follow up orders and provide information. For the whole of Australia there currently exists only one AGPS travelling salesman.

13.32 AGPS officers suggested to the Committee that with some exceptions government publications were not actively sought by commercial outlets for selling. To this the Committee would suggest that consumer interest is high when AGPS facilities alone can account for some \$3 million annual sales.

13.33 The Committee is keen to see that more agencies are established by the AGPS and, where appropriate, it would suggest that sharing arrangements should be undertaken with commercial booksellers. If supported by travelling salesmen who could supply a prompt back-up service, the further incursion of AGPS into commercial retailing areas would, in the Committee's opinion, be an attractive proposition to commercial booksellers. The Committee does not share the pessimism of the AGPS that such arrangements would not be a workable proposition, and while initial operations are unlikely to be profitable, some general overheads, for example, rent, lighting, etc. expenses would be shared with the business partner and accordingly, initial losses are unlikely to be significant. The Committee anticipates that the profitability of such operations would follow a similar trend to that of the Bookshops.

13.34 To the Committee it is most important that the public be made aware of the availability of Commonwealth publications and have ready access to their acquisition. There is no sense in publishing a document for sale unless it is readily available. Otherwise the expense and effort of departmental officers producing the document, to a large extent, is wasted. Whether AGPS is placed on a commercial footing in accordance with the Committee's recommendations or not, the profitability to the AGPS and improved access to information by the public possible through this line of activity is too great to remain unexplored. The Committee recommends:

That the AGPS devote greater attention to increasing wholesale sales to retail outlets, in particular by:

- (a) *the increase of stocks held by existing agents;*
- (b) *investigating the possibility of increasing the number of its commercial selling agents and taking whatever action is necessary to effect further expansion in this area;*
- (c) *investigating the possibility of establishing shared selling facilities with commercial bookstores, and taking whatever action is thought necessary to effect the establishment of such facilities; and*
- (d) *the employment of sales representatives to support AGPS sales outlets.*

13.35 For the above innovations to be successful the areas of activity would need to be centralised in large population centres where tertiary institutes exist, for example Wagga Wagga, Townsville, Geelong, Wollongong and Newcastle. The Committee considers that the cost of extending selling activities into these areas would be more than made up by increased revenue.

Commercial Operations

13.36 As a general rule the wholesale discount is fixed at 40% or less on agency titles, a figure which is comparable with commercial practice. However, the present policy of firm sale with no return inhibits large sales of individual titles. In addition, the Committee was advised that the adding of freight charges is resented by resellers. The restrictions on AGPS travel severely limit the opportunities for personal contact with bookselling agents. To these points the Committee suggests that to enter the commercial field the AGPS needs to align itself more closely with commercial practice. The Committee recommends:

That, wherever possible, the AGPS follow commercial practices when undertaking wholesale selling activities.

Mobile Bookshops

13.37 During the financial year 1973-74 the AGPS operated one mobile bookshop. Based in Canberra, its main areas of operation were concentrated in south eastern

Australia although it did go as far north as Brisbane. This unit would appear to have provided a useful purpose by 'showing the flag' in areas where Bookshop facilities were unavailable. Sales amounting to \$28,049 were achieved during the three years of operation between 1974 and 1976. However, due to the high cost of running the unit, which included a support staff of two officers, the service was discontinued. Ideally, the Committee would like to see this unit and others re-established, but in the present economic climate this would be unwise. The drain on the Publications Trust Account would be significant. Instead, the Committee suggests that its role can be carried out far more economically and efficiently by the establishment of more AGPS retail agents in city areas other than capital cities, and by encouraging more commercial booksellers to stock AGPS publications.

Sales by other Commonwealth agents

13.38 Many Commonwealth departments and statutory authorities carry out a selling function in connection with their departmental publications. Most of these activities are small and on an 'across the counter' basis. Documents sold or given away on a free issue basis are usually small explanatory brochures or booklets relating to the field of activity of the department concerned. However, in other instances, departments operate full scale bookshop and information services, for example, the Bureau of Census and Statistics and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.

13.39 The number of publications available through such outlets would amount to many thousands, most of which would be unknown to the AGPS and would not be available through its sales outlets. While the Committee concedes that in some cases the existence of departmental outlets is appropriate, it is concerned that in others, waste may occur as a result of their existence or establishment. In essence, they are duplicating the purpose of AGPS Bookshops and could be said to be in competition with them. Their existence prevents the public from going to one authority or central point to obtain all Commonwealth publications. To the Committee the attainment of such a service is a distant but most desirable goal for the AGPS. In evidence, the AGPS advised that its present resources would not permit it to stock and sell the majority of these publications, although the desirability of such a course was conceded. The Committee accepts this assessment. But it also is keen to see that AGPS can provide a total service to its customers. Accordingly, AGPS needs to be aware of departmental saleable publications and should be able to acquire them on behalf of customers. The Committee recommends:

That departments which carry out sales of their departmental publications to the public be authorised by the Board of Review, wherever appropriate, to act as a selling agent of the AGPS.

That where the Board of Review considers that the retail activities of a department are inappropriate and could be more effectively and economically carried out by the AGPS, the Board of Review shall recommend to the responsible Minister and the Minister concerned that the responsibility for such activities should be transferred to the AGPS.

That departmental selling agents provide the AGPS with all necessary bibliographical information on their publications, including whether they are available for free issue or sale.

Pricing of internal departmental publications

13.40 The Committee is aware that departments vary considerably in their pricing policy concerning internal publications not sold by AGPS and the basis upon which

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- (d) *the employment of sales representatives to support AGPS sales outlets.*

13.35 For the above innovations to be successful the areas of activity would need to be centralised in large population centres where tertiary institutes exist, for example Wagga Wagga, Townsville, Geelong, Wollongong and Newcastle. The Committee considers that the cost of extending selling activities into these areas would be more than made up by increased revenue.

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13.36 As a general rule the wholesale discount is fixed at 40% or less on agency titles, a figure which is comparable with commercial practice. However, the present policy of firm sale with no return inhibits large sales of individual titles. In addition, the Committee was advised that the adding of freight charges is resented by resellers. The restrictions on AGPS travel severely limit the opportunities for personal contact with bookselling agents. To these points the Committee suggests that to enter the commercial field the AGPS needs to align itself more closely with commercial practice. The Committee recommends:

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Sales by other Commonwealth agents

13.38 Many Commonwealth departments and statutory authorities carry out a selling function in connection with their departmental publications. Most of these activities are small and on an 'across the counter' basis. Documents sold or given away on a free issue basis are usually small explanatory brochures or booklets relating to the field of activity of the department concerned. However, in other instances, departments operate full scale bookshop and information services, for example, the Bureau of Census and Statistics and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.

13.39 The number of publications available through such outlets would amount to many thousands, most of which would be unknown to the AGPS and would not be available through its sales outlets. While the Committee concedes that in some cases the existence of departmental outlets is appropriate, it is concerned that in others, waste may occur as a result of their existence or establishment. In essence, they are duplicating the purpose of AGPS Bookshops and could be said to be in competition with them. Their existence prevents the public from going to one authority or central point to obtain all Commonwealth publications. To the Committee the attainment of such a service is a distant but most desirable goal for the AGPS. In evidence, the AGPS advised that its present resources would not permit it to stock and sell the majority of these publications, although the desirability of such a course was conceded. The Committee accepts this assessment. But it also is keen to see that AGPS can provide a total service to its customers. Accordingly, AGPS needs to be aware of departmental saleable publications and should be able to acquire them on behalf of customers. The Committee recommends:

That departments which carry out sales of their departmental publications to the public be authorised by the Board of Review, wherever appropriate, to act as a selling agent of the AGPS.

That where the Board of Review considers that the retail activities of a department are inappropriate and could be more effectively and economically carried out by the AGPS, the Board of Review shall recommend to the responsible Minister and the Minister concerned that the responsibility for such activities should be transferred to the AGPS.

That departmental selling agents provide the AGPS with all necessary bibliographical information on their publications, including whether they are available for free issue or sale.

Pricing of internal departmental publications

13.40 The Committee is aware that departments vary considerably in their pricing policy concerning internal publications not sold by AGPS and the basis upon which

free issue takes place. The Committee also notes clause 49(1)(a) of the *Freedom of Information Bill 1978* which states:

the making of charges of amounts, or at rates, fixed by or in accordance with the regulations for access to documents (including the provision of copies of transcripts) in accordance with this Act, including requiring deposits on account of such charges;

The Committee accepts the fact that departmental estimates of expenditure have been approved by the Parliament and that departments should have some licence in how they spend their funds. However, the Committee would prefer to see departmental consistency in this matter and feels that the establishment of guidelines is necessary. The Committee recommends:

That the AGPS draw up guidelines, to be approved by the Board of Review and the responsible Minister, for the setting of prices for internally produced departmental publications, and the basis upon which free issue of such publications should take place.

Pricing policy of the AGPS

13.41 Present pricing policy of the AGPS is based on a formula designed to recoup the cost of printing AGPS sales copies, including cost of paper, ink, press work, binding, etc. plus overheads associated with selling, namely, warehousing, handling, promotion and the operation of selling facilities (including Bookshops). All costs and income are directed through the Publications Trust Account. The fact that the Trust Account has shown a small profit over the years of its operation would suggest that the formula used, namely, three times run-on printing cost plus 10 per cent to cover design and contracting costs plus or minus 20 per cent to allow for special circumstances, is correctly based.

13.42 Since most publications are produced to support the role of the department the development costs (writing, editing and other authorship costs) and fixed production costs (design, art work, editing, etc.) are borne by the initiating department. The AGPS selling price does not attempt to recoup these costs. The Committee has been advised that investigations are being conducted on an inter-departmental basis to review pricing policy for government publications. It is suggested that authorship costs will be examined with a view to recouping part of their expense in the sales price. The current pricing structure is based on the premise that it is the function of government to inform the public and that only selling costs incurred by AGPS should be recovered. Although, on occasions, the AGPS has increased the basic price of a popular publication by the allowable 20 per cent margin (Paragraph 13.41), in the main, no attempt has been made to charge what the market will bear. In the Committee's opinion, to attempt to recoup authorship costs on a full cost recovery basis, in most cases, would result in a sales price so high that the resulting loss of potential sales would be self-defeating to the purpose of producing government publications. A publication for public consumption should not be priced beyond the means or acceptance of the user. It must be remembered that a great deal of research generally goes into the production of a government publication which would not normally occur in the commercial counterpart. To attempt partial recovery in areas of fixed costs would result in undesirable price variations in production runs, that is, when production runs are low, unit costs are high; when a production run is high the corresponding unit cost is reduced. Without conducting a thorough investigation into the role, purpose and function of Commonwealth publications and in the absence of supporting documentation, the Committee would be unable to support price increases based on the rationale contained in this paragraph.

13.43 Nevertheless, the Committee concedes that if the operations of the AGPS are to be based on a commercial self-supporting basis it may be necessary to vary its prices. The Committee recommends:

That retail prices for AGPS publications be set at a rate which will recover all costs associated with the selling function.

That, while recognising that the price of publications should be kept within reasonable limits to enable wide availability and circulation of documents, the AGPS be permitted to vary its pricing formula after agreement is reached with the Board of Review.

13.44 The Committee was informed that the present method of calculating prices allows author departments to subsidise a publication by up to 20 per cent if, with the concurrence of the AGPS, it considers that there is some justification in making it available at a reduced price. Such subsidy must be met from departmental funds since it has a departmental rather than an AGPS purpose. The Committee supports this policy. It has sympathy with the suggestion that departments should be able to subsidise the price by more than 20 per cent. Flexibility, together with an increased ability to increase free issue (if justified and if the Committee's recommendation contained at paragraph 13.58 is adopted), should satisfy departmental distribution requirements in most instances. Nevertheless, should a department wish to subsidise a publication to a greater extent than the 20 per cent currently allowable the Committee feels that this should be permitted. It also feels that it should be the author department which determines whether the subsidy is applied and not the AGPS, as is currently the case. The Committee reiterates the view that once departmental estimates are approved by Parliament, departments should have the right to expand distribution to the public by decreasing the price of a particular publication. The department is responsible for its publishing program. It should know how best to achieve the aims of the program. However, the Committee hopes that occasions on which large subsidies are employed would be rare. The Board of Review should be advised whenever a subsidy is used so that such distribution could be questioned if necessary. The Committee also thinks it appropriate that the AGPS should establish guidelines within which the application of a subsidy is appropriate. The Committee recommends:

That departments be permitted to subsidise the selling price of a publication from their departmental appropriations.

That the AGPS draw up guidelines governing the application of selling price subsidies for departmental publications and that such guidelines be submitted to the Board of Review for its consideration and approval.

That if departments wish to subsidise the selling price of a publication by more than 20 per cent of the AGPS retail price, agreement must be obtained from the Board of Review: provided that if insufficient time is available for the Board of Review to consider the departmental request, the department be permitted to subsidise the publication to an extent deemed necessary.

That wherever a department subsidises a publication, the instance shall be reported by the AGPS to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action.

Discount

13.45 AGPS currently allows a discount of 10 per cent off the retail price of publications priced in excess of \$1.00 to certain categories of users. These include schools, universities, libraries, professional teaching staff, etc. The categories also include departments and public servants. The Committee is advised that this practice is in keeping with those of commercial booksellers. The Committee doubts that discount should

be granted to these last mentioned categories. Of further concern, the discount is only given on application. Only those who are aware of it through AGPS circulars are able to obtain its benefit. No other advertising is undertaken to indicate that a discount exists. Discount arrangements are usually administratively expensive to provide. If discounts are provided there must be a commercial or other logical purpose behind it. Discounts should not be given as a concession and must be well known to users. It also notes from AGPS circulars that unlike commercial practice, there is no discount for purchases of large quantities of publications. The Committee recommends:

That the AGPS retail discount rate and its application be revised and made more in keeping with commercial practice.

Distribution

Objective and responsibilities

13.46 The main objective of this sub-section is to provide an efficient central distribution facility for its own publications and those of the Parliament, departments and other AGPS clients. This is achieved by the use of high speed addressing, inserting and wrapping equipment combined with computer-generated address lists. Details of the number of publications distributed on behalf of clients are given at paragraph 13.5.

13.47 The responsibility of the AGPS in departmental distribution is governed by the number of jobs for which departments request distribution assistance. Currently all departments undertake the distribution of some, if not all, of their departmental publishing programs. For certain departments the extent of distribution and the number of publications involved has warranted the employment of staff specifically for this task. It would be logical for each department to have specialised equipment which would facilitate the distribution function of the department. Where departments have staff whose duties are related solely to distribution it could be expected that the support equipment would be more sophisticated. Currently there are some 108 officers employed in departments (other than the AGPS) to carry out distribution requirements. One Melbourne based department (Transport) employs as many as 23 officers in this field. A summary of officers employed in this area is included in Appendix VII—Survey of departments staff (including AGPS) involved in the production of Government publications, 1978.

13.48 To the Committee overall savings could be achieved if more of the distribution responsibilities of departments were undertaken by the AGPS, particularly in the area of serials, catalogues and other publications where distribution lists are relatively constant. Economies of scale are well suited to an operation of this type where specialised staff and equipment can be employed. A centralised distribution service would be able to establish target distribution lists which would cover specific areas of community activities, that is, social welfare, business, the legal profession, etc. This collation of information would be invaluable to a department which might be seeking advice on possible distribution targets or revised distribution of its publications.

13.49 AGPS indicated to the Committee that a number of departments have expressed an interest in handing over their distribution responsibilities to the AGPS. However, it is unable to accept these due to the lack of staff resources. By converting AGPS to a commercial unit, and by undertaking large scale distribution on behalf of departments, service charges asked of clients would, in the opinion of the Committee, more than compensate for AGPS staff increases necessary to provide the service. The Committee would expect the number of staff employed in departments to be reduced

as the AGPS acquire more responsibilities in this area. Overall savings to Consolidated Revenue should result. The Committee recommends:

That the AGPS undertake negotiations with departments and statutory authorities with a view to assuming a greater AGPS responsibility for the distribution of departmental publications.

That the Board of Review regularly review the distribution activities of departments and, where appropriate, recommend that elements of departmental distribution be undertaken by the AGPS.

That where a department is unwilling to relinquish distribution responsibility following a recommendation of the Board of Review, the matter be referred to the Committee for its consideration.

13.50 The Committee expects that the introduction of these recommendations would improve the overall effectiveness and achieve economies in departmental distribution. However, to be attractive to clients, distribution must be achieved at a satisfactory turnaround time to the client, and at a cost equal to or less than that which would apply had the responsibility remained with the department.

Equipment

13.51 The Committee was surprised to note that of the three high speed collating, labelling and wrapping machines located within the section, only one was used on a regular basis. Explanations were given that one machine was far too sophisticated for the purposes of the section, while inadequate work existed to keep another operating to a satisfactory capacity. In any event, idle machine capacity must currently exist since staffing resources are such that the section would be unable to efficiently carry out additional distribution responsibilities if work was provided to keep machines operating to full capacity. These aspects of the under-utilisation of capital equipment have been pointed out also in the latest Report of the Auditor-General (1977-78) in which he reported (at page 148):

- a packing machine and associated label dispenser costing \$28,060, purchased for wrapping and labelling weekly Hansards, was being used at between 20 and 30 per cent capacity but not for the purposes stated prior to purchase; and
- a labelling machine costing \$21,722 had a recorded usage of 16 hours for a 10 month period since May 1977.

In explanation to the Auditor-General, the AGPS suggested that the equipment had not operated to the standards claimed by manufacturers. However, the essential problem appears to be that insufficient work is being directed through the section to achieve economic utilisation. Should the Committee's recommendations appearing in paragraph 13.49 above be implemented, this problem should be removed.

13.52 The Committee was surprised further to learn that computer support services provided to the section for labelling were obtained from outside the Department of Administrative Services. These were provided through the computer controlled by the Department of Finance. Booking time had to be lodged with that Department before computer generated labels could be produced. A consistent and responsive service to clients cannot, therefore, always be achieved. The Committee is aware that other services of the AGPS utilise computer equipment, particularly in accounts, management and cataloguing areas. It is certain that, with the wide variety of equipment available today, equipment could be purchased which has the capacity to meet the labelling requirements. If the section is to operate efficiently and is to provide a service which will retain existing clients and attract new ones, the appropriate equipment must be available and used to an economic capacity. To employ equipment which is unsuitable for

the job can only add to the distribution costs of AGPS, which must in turn flow on to clients. The Committee recommends:

That the Public Service Board investigate the equipment needs of the distribution sub-section of the AGPS with a view to recommending the replacement of unsuitable equipment or providing new suitable equipment, where necessary.

It is obvious to the Committee that mistakes in the purchasing of equipment have occurred in the past, but to continue to use unsuitable equipment can only compound these mistakes.

Official and free issue of departmental publications

13.53 Internal distribution of departmental publications is divided into official distribution, for example, archival, internal and official departmental requirements, official exchange, etc., and free issue to outside target groups. Within AGPS guidelines, official and free issue distribution is the responsibility of the author body. Copies to meet this purpose are acquired from AGPS at run-on cost.

13.54 The situation regarding the official and free issue of departmental publications has been one of great contention in recent years. Since its inception, AGPS has been aware that considerable unnecessary expense occurs in this area of Commonwealth publishing and that, on occasions, AGPS sales have been adversely affected by extensive departmental free issues. However, it was only in 1977 that AGPS was able to receive government backing to release AGPS Circular 27, which established guidelines for departments to follow when drawing up free distribution lists for publications. Until AGPS received government support it could see little benefit in implementing the Erwin Committee recommendation:

Your Committee recommends that uniform policies for the free issue of saleable publications be drawn up by the proposed publishing office.¹

Without firm government support departments would be most unlikely to relinquish any responsibility in this field and accept and follow any such guidelines.

13.55 AGPS Circular 27 establishes the categories for official and free distribution of departmental publications. In the main these are acceptable to departments and receive little opposition from them. As a result of the introduction of the guidelines, considerable savings have been achieved. For example, in the period since January 1977 departmental free issue has been reduced by an average of 20 per cent per publication and in one instance the reduction has been as high as 90 per cent. Where disagreement occurs between AGPS and its client the Circular provides appeal provisions which enable departments through their Minister to appeal to the Minister responsible for the AGPS and the Minister for Finance. This has not occurred to date although one Minister, on behalf of his department, took the matter up with the Minister responsible for the AGPS. On this occasion the view of the AGPS prevailed.

13.56 The Committee is aware that AGPS intervention in this area is resented by some departments. They complain that there is little or no flexibility in the free issue guidelines to enable the individual and special purposes behind the production of some departmental publications to be met. They suggest further that their estimates are approved by Parliament and accordingly their publishing program should not be reviewed by a lesser authority. When disagreement occurs over the free issue of a publication the will of AGPS has always prevailed as Ministers have been reluctant to

take the steps necessary to implement the appeal provisions described above. Ministers possibly feel that the free issue of publications is too minor a matter with which to bother their colleagues.

13.57 The Committee feels that future variations to the guidelines should retain the element of consistency which currently applies. The reasons for the various parts of the guidelines must be made clear to departments so that they are easy to explain to potential recipients and relatively inexpensive to administer. The Committee also considers that statutory authorities should comply with any such guidelines although it appreciates the difficulty in compelling their adherence to them.

13.58 However, the Committee has some sympathy with the attitude of departments to this matter. It feels that some degree of flexibility should be introduced, but to weaken unduly the present control would undoubtedly re-introduce excessive free issue distribution. A disincentive to prevent excessive official and free issue is still necessary. The Committee considers it appropriate for such disincentive to be in a monetary form and believes that AGPS objections concerning loss in potential sales will be satisfied if additional free issue copies are acquired from AGPS at the commercial bookseller rate. The Committee recommends:

That the AGPS remain the authority responsible for preparing guidelines governing the official and free issue of departmental publications in accordance with government policy.

That official and free issue guidelines drawn up by the AGPS be revised to draw on the experience gained in the two years since free issue guidelines were introduced and that these be submitted to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate recommendations to the Government, and that this Committee be notified of such recommendations.

That where a department wishes to undertake a distribution of one of its publications which is in excess of the guidelines, such distribution be permitted, but the additional copies required to meet the excess distribution be acquired from the AGPS at the recommended retail price less 40 per cent.

That where official and free issue distribution of departmental publications is in excess of AGPS guidelines, the matter be reported by the AGPS to the Board of Review for its consideration and appropriate action.

13.59 The Committee would expect each department to regularly review its official and free issue distribution lists. Within such reviews, it would also expect departments to consider the rationale behind distribution and from past experience determine how effective distribution has been. Distribution must not be based on courtesy or routine. There must be a purpose behind it.

Bookshops as Inquiry Centres

13.60 In 1973 the Government of the day transferred responsibility for the operation of the Bookshops from the AGPS and placed them under the control of the Australian Information Service, Department of the Media. Inquiry officers were attached to the Bookshops, which subsequently became known as Publications and Inquiry Centres. It was considered that a government Bookshop was the most logical place for the public to seek information on government. Some eighteen staff were attached to the Centres and they, combined with the existing staff, handled on average some 400,000 inquiries per year. The annual cost of providing the service from Bookshops (less cost of back-up staff located in Canberra) was estimated at around \$140,000 per annum in 1975-76. With the change in Government the inquiry service was discontinued in 1976 and the responsibility for the Bookshops reverted to the AGPS.

¹ Erwin Committee Report, op.cit., Para 149.

13.61 Assessments were provided to the Committee on the type of information sought. These revealed that almost half the requests for information dealt with matters concerning publications. A large proportion of the remaining inquirers sought information concerning telephone numbers for the service sections of various government departments and agencies. The Committee formed the view from its Evidence and the opinions offered by officials that if telephone directories contained more information, less would have been demanded from the inquiry officers. Approximately some 20 per cent of inquiries related to State matters.

13.62 Essentially, the information service provided a referral service between the public and the appropriate department or agency. Usually the information sought was basic, for example, where to acquire a passport (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs). However, on occasions, the information sought was complex or related to a subject matter upon which the inquiry officers did not have sufficient information to give a complete answer. These inquiries had to be re-directed to Canberra or to a local department.

13.63 When examined by the Committee in mid-1977, the Melbourne Bookshop Manager stated that his shop was still receiving a great number of telephone calls seeking information on government, even though the Bookshops no longer held an information responsibility. While staff endeavoured to supply the information sought, pressures of other duties did not always make this possible. It was explained that information continued to be sought from the Bookshop because the inquiry number was still listed in the local telephone directory, and because people had come to expect the service due to its prior existence.

13.64 The Committee took evidence from an officer of the South Australian Government who has a responsibility in the area of inquiry centres in that State. He advised the Committee that each day some twenty-five inquiries are made of his centres which relate directly to Commonwealth matters. This figure represented some eighteen per cent of total inquiries.

13.65 It would appear to the Committee that there remains a need for the public to know how and where to obtain government services and information on government policy. It has been suggested to the Committee that there may be a need for a total service. There was a referral service in association with the Bookshops provided to meet some of this need between 1973 and 1976. Other options include improving the government section of the telephone directory and compiling a register or directory in which would appear details of services provided by departments and government agencies and how they might be obtained. This could be compiled by the AGPS in much the same way as it currently produces the Commonwealth Directory. Further inquiries which might not be satisfied by these innovations could be directed to the 188 Federal Parliamentarians who now have research officers to assist them in such duties. The Committee recommends:

That the Parliament undertake an investigation into the requirements of a complete inquiry and information service for the general public and that the results of such an inquiry be laid before the Parliament as soon as possible.

That steps be taken by the appropriate authorities to revise and improve the information section on government services provided in the front of telephone directories.

*That the AGPS compile a directory containing information on the services provided by government departments and statutory authorities; such directory to be complete, simple to read and understand and updated on an annual basis.**

Marketing Assessments

13.66 In evidence, AGPS was criticised for its caution in ordering insufficient copies of reports to meet sales requirements. On other occasions AGPS has been reluctant to reprint a publication as the cost of reprinting, which is met totally from the Publications Trust Account, might not be met by sales. Individual members of the Committee are aware of AGPS's caution in this area as all have at one time or another been affected by the unavailability of particular publications.

13.67 AGPS replied that it attempts to operate on a business-like basis when ordering 'for sale' copies. A market assessment is made for each publication based on likely public interest, price and the proposed free distribution. If there is a likely market, a quantity is purchased for resale taking into account the need to avoid overstocking (leading to the pulping of stock) and understocking (causing the publication to go out of print too soon).

13.68 Nevertheless, the Committee feels that inadequate pre-ordering of sales stock occurs on too many occasions. Instances such as the *Freedom of Information Bill 1978* and the Report of the Task Force on Co-ordination in Welfare and Health (Vol. I) immediately spring to mind. It would appear that marketing assessments are too frequently made on inadequate information. In this regard the Committee would see both the department concerned and the AGPS to be at fault. To avoid the need to undertake expensive reprints and to ensure that healthy stocks of publications are available to the public, the best possible assessments of requirements should be made at the initial ordering of 'for sale' copies. There is little point in publishing a document if it is unavailable to the intended user. The Committee recommends:

That AGPS thoroughly investigate the methods it uses to assess likely public demand of publications.

13.69 The Committee suggests that the above investigation would examine commercial practices in this area and departmental responsibilities concerning the provision of appropriate information. Having completed this investigation the Committee sees the Board of Review playing a supervisory role. The Committee recommends:

That any proposals which might arise from the AGPS examination of its methods employed in assessing marketing requirements be approved by the Board of Review.

That the Board of Review ensure that departments provide suitable information to the AGPS upon which a satisfactory marketing assessment can be carried out.

13.70 Despite the improvement in ordering which might arise from undertaking a more accurate marketing assessment, on occasions inadequate or excessive stocks will be printed. Where for sale stocks are inadequate and the author department considers that a reprint is justified, the Committee considers that this should be agreed to by the AGPS although such action might adversely affect the Publications Trust Account. The Committee considers this course to be an incentive to make an accurate initial assessment. It would also ensure that such publications always are available. Where overstocking occurs, these should be depleted by active marketing campaigns and, where thought necessary, price reductions could apply.

* Shortly after drafting this Report the Committee was made aware that AGPS is compiling such a directory. The Committee looks forward to its publication and trusts that the information contained therein is similar to that sought by the Committee.

Promotion

13.71 AGPS has a number of vehicles and methods by which its publications are advertised. In summary, these are:

- (a) *Weekly list*—provides information on Parliamentary titles, legislation and departmental titles, published by the AGPS during the relevant period. It is issued free of charge to non-trading libraries, government and semi-government authorities, schools and other organisations likely to be approached by individuals wishing to obtain government information. The publication is currently distributed free to some 3,000 recipients.
- (b) *Monthly list*—provides information on all publications placed on sale by AGPS. It is the main promotion vehicle of the AGPS and contains blurbs on certain publications, order forms and general information on ordering, selling conditions, etc. It is distributed free to booksellers, libraries, organisations and individuals through the mail or by personal contact. Present distribution is approximately 13,000 copies.
- (c) *Cumulative list*—provides information similar to that contained in the monthly list but with additional descriptive information and cross referencing. It is an annual publication and sells for \$2. To date, approximately 800 copies of the 1977 list have been sold.
- (d) *Brochures and selected lists*—provide information on selected publications. They are distributed free on an intermittent basis.
- (e) *Commercial advertising*—undertaken through the news media, periodicals and journals on an *ad hoc* basis.
- (f) *Displays*—through bookshops, exhibitions and other selected venues.

13.72 All witnesses appeared to be satisfied with both the content and distribution of AGPS catalogues. The Committee is also aware that brochures on selected titles are released to weekly or monthly list recipients on a regular and satisfactory basis. However, the Committee does query the extent and the cost involved in the free distribution of the weekly and monthly lists. The Committee notes from information received from the AGPS early in its Inquiry (March 1977) that consideration was being given to the setting of appropriate charges for these publications. While the Committee would suggest that to apply too high a figure (and certainly not one based on full recoupment of production and postage costs) would have an adverse reaction on sales, it would support the application of a nominal subscription charge if only to eliminate those recipients who make infrequent use of the lists and thereby take advantage of its free distribution. This particularly applies to the monthly list. The Committee is disappointed that AGPS has failed to act in this matter. Over the years indecision has resulted in a considerable drain on the Publications Trust Account.

13.73 It is with commercial advertising that the Committee considers that AGPS promotion is sadly lacking. In fact, of all areas of AGPS operation, it is here that improvements are required and should have taken place well before the issuing of this Report.

13.74 AGPS very rarely uses the media or journals to advertise its wares. Only on the most infrequent occasions will one discover an AGPS advertisement in the capital city dailies. Even on such occasions the advertisement used is often deficient. For example, when advertising the publication of the Third Edition of the Style Manual, the same advertisement was used Australia-wide stating that copies could be purchased at AGPS Bookshops, yet no addresses were given for the location of Bookshops. The Committee considers it essential that whenever advertisements are placed in connection with any publication, the opportunity should be taken to educate the

public with regard to the location of shops, the availability of a mail order service and to indicate the range of publications available. Advertising should not be restricted to promoting the one publication but also should be directed to promoting the AGPS as a central facility to obtain government and other topical publications.

13.75 While AGPS stated that advertising took place in journals and periodicals, little evidence could be found to support the claim. Also, now that AGPS lists are produced by computer, little difficulty can be seen in preparing lists of similar and topical publications for distribution to target resellers, institutes, etc. For example, publications dealing with the law, criminal code, freedom of information, etc. could be listed, and, together with mail order and bookshop information, be targeted for inclusion in a legal profession journal. The same could be said for medical publications in a medical journal. Lists of topical publications and, where appropriate, reviews should be prepared for inclusion in the weekend press. Again the location of Bookshops and the existence of mail order sales should be given.

13.76 The Committee is aware that some publications have more attraction in some States than others—the wine industry in South Australia, shipping in Tasmania, mining in Queensland and Western Australia, etc. Advertising should take cognisance of this fact.

13.77 The Committee was surprised to learn that little or no evaluation of its various promotional methods was undertaken by the AGPS. For any semi-commercial organisation whose end function is to sell its wares, the Committee finds this admission somewhat disappointing. In response to this and many of the above criticisms, AGPS suggested to the Committee that staff shortages were the prime reason for such deficiencies. It went so far as to suggest that any successful advertising campaign would seriously embarrass its inadequate selling resources. While the Committee might agree that this is the current situation it finds the deficiencies difficult to justify when staffing resources were more adequate during previous years.

13.78 Currently AGPS prepares its own blurbs to promote its publications. In most instances these are sufficient. However, on occasions, more sophisticated written support material for inclusion in journals or the weekend press will need to be obtained from author departments. The Committee trusts that this information would be forthcoming.

13.79 If AGPS is to become more self sufficient on a commercial basis, vast improvements in the promotional area of its operations must take place. The Committee recommends:

That, within normal commercial business constraints, the AGPS advertise the existence of its Bookshops, mail order services and the range of publications which are available through these sources by consistent advertising campaigns in newspapers, journals and, where appropriate, the broadcasting media.

That AGPS encourage the reviewing of its publications in suitable news media.

That computer lists of relevant and topical publications be prepared and issued to target user groups.

That attention be directed towards advertising titles of interest in a particular State in that State's media.

That regular evaluations of AGPS promotion methods be undertaken to ensure that the most effective and economic means are employed.

Commercial viability of Sales and Distribution function

13.80 Throughout this Chapter the Committee has expressed concern on the methods by which the AGPS promotes its publications and undertakes its selling

function For the Committee's concept of commercial viability for AGPS operations, it is of paramount importance that adequate revenue be obtained through sales. The Committee trusts that should its recommendation contained in paragraph 14.3 be adopted, the expertise provided by contracting an outside commercial expert to act as Controller of the AGPS will be sufficient to ensure an improvement of AGPS operations in the sales and distribution area. However, it may well be that due to the importance of this area, in confirming the viability of the AGPS, further expert outside assistance might be required. The Committee would suggest that the appropriate authorities bear this consideration in mind for the immediate future.

Other Matters

(a) Disposal of surplus stocks

13.81 In any business undertaking stocks must be continually turned over to ensure that the best use is made of selling and storage facilities. The same could be said of AGPS operations. Apart from undertaking marketing promotions, reducing prices or advertising, little can be done to economically dispose of surplus AGPS stocks. However, care must be taken to ensure that a copy of each publication is always on hand for reproduction should a total disposal of stocks of a particular publication occur and a fresh and pronounced public interest takes place. To prevent this occurrence, the Committee recommends:

That AGPS surplus sales stocks be disposed of only after first offering copies to the National Librarian, the Australian Archives and the author body.

That two copies of each publication be retained by the AGPS within its records.

(b) Own publishing

13.82 AGPS currently undertakes a minor publishing role for its own publications. These include AGPS Circulars, the Commonwealth Directory and the Style Manual. In conjunction with other government agencies joint publishing has also been undertaken, for example, the Australian War Memorial and AGPS publication entitled 'Blamey - Controversial Soldier'. Recently, the AGPS entered a new publishing field with the release of the *Stay Alive* handbook. In this last instance it was determined that such a publication would be useful and, in the absence of an author body, AGPS undertook responsibility for producing the publication. The Committee feels that whenever there is a need for a publication and there is no apparent author body the AGPS might well be the logical author. On other occasions, the AGPS could be a logical co-ordinator for the production of a publication where several departments have a mixed responsibility in a particular field.

13.83 Strictly speaking, the AGPS has no authority to undertake a publishing role for its own publications. No Cabinet decision has given it such authority nor should expenses for such publishing be met from the Publications Trust Account. The Committee believes that the AGPS should have such authority and that expenditure and receipts should logically pass through the Publications Trust Account. However, the Committee would not like to see this role become too large an activity at the expense of its prime areas of responsibility.

13.84 While departments can be frustrated by the failure of AGPS to undertake reprinting, on occasions, AGPS itself is frustrated by a department which will not authorise the reprinting of a publication which is out of stock. Reasons for such failure vary. It may simply be a failure within the department to make the necessary decision, or permission will not be granted since a new edition might be under production. To ensure that stocks of popular publications are always available AGPS seeks to have a

reprinting right with regard to departmental publications. The Committee cannot agree with this proposition although it has a sympathy with the AGPS in this regard which has already been stated in a previous report.¹ The Committee feels that the control of a publication should remain with the author body in which the initiating and administrative responsibility is vested. The Committee recommends:

That with the approval of the Board of Review, AGPS be permitted to undertake its own publishing program either singly or in conjunction with other departments or statutory authorities.

That whenever the AGPS seeks authority from an author body to reprint a publication, the author body advise the AGPS of its decision, without delay, with regard to the request.

That—

- (a) *where AGPS requires a reprint of a publication, the establishment costs of reprinting be met by the AGPS (departments may acquire copies at run on cost);*
- (b) *where a department requires a reprint of a publication for its internal purposes and no 'for sale' copies are available through the AGPS, the establishment costs of reprinting be met by the department (AGPS may acquire 'for sale' copies at run on cost);*
- (c) *where there is a joint AGPS and departmental requirement for reprinting, the establishment costs be shared between the two bodies on a mutually agreed basis; and*
- (d) *where disagreement occurs in (c) above, the matter be referred to the Board of Review for resolution.*

(c) Service Publications Section, AGPS

13.85 In 1976 responsibility passed to AGPS for the control of the ministerial document reproduction service together with the funding, compilation and editorial control of the Commonwealth Record and the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette.

13.86 Functions of the Gazette Office are to:

- promulgate government and executive decisions;
- notify necessary information required under specific Acts;
- record Public Service staffing activities;
- compile a Commonwealth Directory.

Functions of the Ministerial Document Service are to:

- Compile and distribute Ministerial Statements.
- Prepare the Commonwealth Record on a weekly basis. (This is a publication which records Ministerial and senior Opposition statements made outside Parliament).

13.87 The *Gazette* is an essential element of government administration and this importance is recognised by legislation. In particular, the *Acts Interpretation Act 1908* specifies that this publication shall be produced and that the Government Printer shall undertake its printing. For this reason, the Committee feels that responsibility for the *Gazette* Office should reside with the Government Printer with the exception of the production of the Commonwealth Directory. Its production is best suited to the publishing program of the AGPS. Since the cost of compiling and printing the *Gazette*

¹ Publication of Commonwealth Acts, Statutory Rules and Legislation of the Territories. Report from the Joint Committee on Publications, op. cit., Para 24

is high (the cost of providing this service in 1977-78 was \$951,009) it cannot be expected that the Government Printer's Trust Account should bear the cost of its production losses. The Committee recommends:

That responsibility for the Gazette Office be transferred to the Government Printer.

That any losses to the Government Printer Trust Account arising out of the publication and distribution of the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette be met from Consolidated Revenue.

13.88 The Committee would prefer that the responsibility for the Ministerial Document Service should be removed from the AGPS to avoid any suggestion that a government might be using AGPS services to promote its own propaganda. Too many overseas examples have occurred in the past where governments have utilised the public service for promotion to the public for this factor to be ignored. However, the practicalities are such that the reasons for this section remaining the responsibility of the AGPS are too great for the Committee to recommend its transferral to another department. The Committee recommends:

That this Committee continue to have an oversight of the Ministerial Document Service to ensure that it continues to be an information source and does not develop into a propaganda instrument.

While it would appear that this section is currently self supporting the Committee does not feel that any losses which might occur in the future should be met from the Publications Trust Account. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That any losses to the Publications Trust Account arising from the operations of the Ministerial Document Service be met from Consolidated Revenue.

CHAPTER 14—MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Responsibilities

14.1 The basic aims of a management services function for the AGPS are to:

- (a) provide efficient services relating to establishments, personnel, industrial, finance, accounting, accommodation and office services;
- (b) maintain financial and staffing controls in accordance with current policies of the Government; and
- (c) review and develop improved systems of management and control, including ADP systems.

14.2 Prior to the absorption of the AGPS into the Department of Administrative Services, management services were provided to the AGPS by a separate branch of that organisation. It provided such support services to the Publishing Branch and the Printing Branch as processing and payment of accounts, responsibility for ADP services and general staffing and administrative matters. With the autonomy recommended by the Committee in paragraphs 18.1 (11), the Committee considers that it is necessary to re-establish this branch under the direct control of the AGPS. The Committee envisages management services as a part of the overall cost of AGPS activities and would expect its operations to be met from the Trust Account in much the same way as similar services at the Government Printing Office are met by the Government Printer Trust Account. In this way, there can be no justification for any non-productive personnel. The Committee believes that efficiency in management services operations would be encouraged by senior management. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That a management services section be re-established within the AGPS to support its activities.

Senior Management

14.3 The recommendations of this Committee, if implemented, will considerably alter AGPS operations and responsibilities and involve it in practices which the Committee feels can only lead to improvements in efficiency and economy in the field of Commonwealth publishing. The Committee envisages that the AGPS will become a self-contained unit in which demands for its services can be met with internal flexibility in much the same way as a commercial publisher. Throughout the Report the Committee has referred to the need for the variation of procedures and the use of innovation by the AGPS. The Committee feels that for a temporary period, an outside expert is required to head the AGPS as Controller and to complete the implementation of the Committee's recommendations in these areas. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That a specialist in the field of printing and publishing be appointed on a limited period contract to the position of Controller, AGPS.

14.4 The Committee feels that this person would need to have an expert knowledge in the field of printing and publishing, have imagination and a good knowledge of the workings of government. The Committee concedes that the task will be most onerous and that the occupant will need the support from various levels of the Public Service such as the Department of Finance and the Public Service Board. When appointed, the Committee would expect the responsible Minister to give the proposed acting Controller any necessary support in his endeavours.

14.5 Should recommendations be implemented which seek to place the AGPS on a commercial and self sufficient basis, the true test of AGPS performance will be the

extent to which it can provide the totality of its services to clients and the public from within its own, self generated funds; whether the cost of its various services to clients is less than that which would apply had the client made his own arrangements; and whether the services provided are reasonably responsive to the demands of the client and the public and are to a standard and an efficiency beyond which would be expected if the client or the public had the responsibility or had to make arrangements individually.

PART V—THE ROLE OF DEPARTMENTS AND STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

CHAPTER 15—RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRINTING AND PUBLISHING

The present situation

15.1 Since the establishment of the AGPS many of the responsibilities of printing and publishing have been transferred from author bodies to the AGPS. Since these are referred to from time to time throughout the Report, it is unnecessary to repeat this detail. It is sufficient to say that, generally speaking, where there has been a potential for improvements and cost savings to be made throughout the various publishing processes by centralising responsibilities, these have been recommended for transfer to the AGPS. This is particularly so in the setting of standards, the procuring of printing, selling and the distributing of publications.

Further rationalisation of functions

15.2 In previous paragraphs the Committee has suggested that in many instances the transferral of printing and publishing responsibilities is incomplete and could be further progressed, the more important examples being in-house printing (Para 9.9), design (Paras 12.7 and 12.8) and distribution (Para 13.49). Departmental personnel involved in these tasks are indicated at Appendix VII—Survey of Departmental Staff (including AGPS) Involved in the production of Government Publications, 1978.

15.3 Throughout the evidence received from departments and statutory authorities the Committee was reinforced in its belief that the AGPS has provided a most necessary service to these bodies and has assisted them greatly in fulfilling their publishing requirements. All agreed that a central publishing authority was both desirable and necessary. However, it was evident that many resented AGPS intrusion into certain areas of responsibility. In particular, matters such as the selection of printer and free distribution are obvious examples. The Committee believes that where centralisation of the publishing function is more administratively efficient and more economic to apply, the responsibility should remain with or be transferred to the AGPS. Where it would appear that certain responsibility has been surrendered by departments or obtained by the AGPS and the Committee feels that the responsibility or partial responsibility should rightly remain with the department, it has recommended accordingly. Examples are the responsibility for the inclusion of libellous or defamatory material in publications (Para 12.10), and free issue of publications (Para 13.58).

15.4 The Committee recognises that departments should not be subject to unnecessary restrictions in the carrying out of their publishing responsibilities. Nevertheless, it believes that it is competent for an expert body, such as the AGPS, in this case, to overview the activities of departments in appropriate areas, and to provide such advice and assistance as may be required. This is not to suggest, however, that departments should cease to perform their proper role in the publishing area. Departments should not be able to abdicate their responsibilities to another authority. While the AGPS should continue to provide informal advice to departments on matters of copyright and the inclusion of defamatory or libellous material, such matters should not be its responsibility.

15.5 Recommendations which support the Committee's attitude in this regard appear in the appropriate area of the Report. Departments and statutory authorities' responsibilities are listed in Chapter 18—The Charter of Responsibilities between Commonwealth Printing and Publishing Agents. Wherever there is a conflict of opinion between author bodies and the AGPS, the Committee looks to the Board of Review to step in and act as arbiter to enable a satisfactory solution to be arrived at.

**PART VI—OVERSIGHT AND THE PRINTING AND
PUBLISHING RESPONSIBILITY
CHAPTER 16—RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMONWEALTH
PRINTING AND PUBLISHING AGENTS**

The need for clarification of responsibilities

16.1 *The establishment of the AGPS and its role originally was laid down by Cabinet decision in 1968. Other functions of the AGPS have more recently been added by subsequent Cabinet decisions. Not having access to the actual text of the Cabinet decisions, the Committee can only draw on the evidence and make its own assessment of administrative arrangements concerning the extent and legitimacy of AGPS activities and the respective roles played in Commonwealth publishing by the Parliament, the AGPS, departments and statutory authorities. The fact that there exists confusion and a general lack of clear lines of demarcation between printing and publishing responsibilities can only lead to duplication of functions and equipment, particularly in the areas of in-house printing, design, editorial control and sales and distribution. The Committee concludes that many of the problems which have been experienced by AGPS and its clients and indeed those outside the AGPS network are, in the main, due to the lack of clear areas of responsibility for Commonwealth publishing agents. Under present government instruction AGPS is required to regulate and control matters which, until recently, had been considered the sole responsibility of the author body. Rightly or wrongly this role attracts to AGPS the tag of being a regulatory authority or a policeman, a tag which is particularly disturbing to a service authority. The lack of clear cut policy leaves many questions on responsibilities unanswered. These include:*

- to what extent statutory authorities are required to use AGPS facilities;
- the role of the AGPS in respect of the preliminary publishing stages of design and specifications;
- whether the Parliamentary departments are, or should be, required to use AGPS facilities;
- the role of the Government Printer in the AGPS structure, and whether he is responsible to the Executive for the production of Parliamentary publications;
- the status of legislation which refers to the Government Printer, despite the fact that his office, role and powers are not defined by statute;
- the terms 'publishing' and 'publications', the meanings of which, being unclear to departments can lead to duplication of publishing roles, particularly in areas of design and specification;
- the questions which arise over which authority has control of a manuscript once it has been received by the AGPS;
- to what extent the AGPS is able to initiate its own publications or reprint departmental publications;
- to what extent the Government Printer is, or should be, allowed to determine the extent of departmental in-house printing operations;
- whether there is adherence to the request to Ministers in a recent Cabinet decision to ensure that the publishing programs of statutory authorities under their control receive adequate scrutiny and that due economy is exercised; and
- whether, with the passage of time, Cabinet decisions tend to lose their original meaning and without re-enforcement may lose their impact.

16.2 The uncertainty of the role and authority of AGPS has led to the use of unusual language in the wording of its circulars, for example, 'your assistance is sought', 'it is hoped' or to quote paragraphs 15, 16 and 17 of AGPS Circular 23:

15 *Under the provisions of the Cabinet decision which established the Australian Government Publishing Service, statutory authorities were exempted from the necessity to use the services of AGPS (unless they so desired) in all respects but one.*

16 *It was assumed in the Cabinet decision that reports required of each authority by its statute would come within the responsibility of AGPS. A number of statutory authorities now use the facilities provided by AGPS to arrange the printing of these reports, but some authorities continue to make their own arrangements.*

17 *Where the latter applies, statutory authorities must advise the Director (Publishing), AGPS as soon as arrangements have been made for their reports to be produced and also the name of the printer. Arrangements can then be made by AGPS for additional Parliamentary copies to be included in the printing run . . .*

These quotations indicate the uncertainty which exists regarding Commonwealth publishing responsibilities. The uncertainty becomes manifest and administratively expensive with the flow of correspondence between the AGPS and the various departments and statutory authorities as one tries to assert its will on the other. Examples of this most wasteful practice are all too common. A number of examples have been provided to the Committee for its information.

16.3 The Committee noted that a number of countries such as the United States of America and Canada have in fact laid down a charter of responsibilities which have either been enforced by legislation or have received the backing of the government of the day. The United States charter is endorsed by legislation while the Canadian equivalent is endorsed by the government. They are complete documents down to the last detail. In England the responsibilities of HMSO and its clients appear to be less regulated with its role having evolved through practice over the years.

16.4 Consistent with its previously expressed views on flexibility, the Committee would not encourage an all-embracing charter, itemised to the last detail. Flexibility is required because of the divergence of departmental requirements and variations to printing and publishing techniques likely to occur in the future. Within the Charter, the Committee would wish to see a mechanism which could allow a change in minor responsibilities. It is for this reason that the Committee has suggested that a charter be established by Cabinet decision rather than by legislative action. The full details of the Committee's determinations with regard to the components of the Charter are dealt with in the appropriate sections of the Report. A consolidation of the Committee's views appears at Chapter 18.

16.5 The Committee, having examined the overseas experience and being aware of difficulties which are apparent in Australia, recommends:

That a Charter of Responsibilities be established by way of Cabinet decision to cover the responsibilities and functions of the Parliament (after consultation with the Presiding Officers), the AGPS, departments and statutory authorities in the printing and publishing of Commonwealth material.

CHAPTER 17—THE BOARD OF REVIEW

Purpose

17.1 Throughout this Report reference has been made to the functions, responsibilities and activities of a proposed Board of Review. The Committee has been most sensitive to the need to maintain the AGPS as a service agent. It is aware that, because of the complexities, variations and need for flexibility within the field of Commonwealth printing and publishing, there exists a need for the creation of a policy body of sufficient authority to be able to direct and supervise author bodies when implementing their publishing program. The Committee sees certain operating discretions given to the proposed Board of Review and would hope that the authority granted it would enable the oversight sought by the Committee to eventuate. Wherever thought necessary, the proposed Board should be able to refer a matter to the Committee for its attention. The Committee places great importance on the role of the Board of Review and within its recommendations has provided for sufficient instructions and authority to enable it to carry out this task.

17.2 Whilst in Australia the creation of such an oversighting authority might be considered a new concept, the Committee is able to draw attention to the existence of similar bodies in Canada and the United States of America. In Canada, its equivalent is the Interdepartmental Advisory Committee on Government Publishing; in the United States, the Joint Congressional Printing Committee carries out comparable duties. While in the latter case the Congressional Committee has a function similar to the Joint Committee on Publications, its role is far wider and includes responsibilities for matters proposed to be allocated to the Board of Review. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That a Board of Review be established on an interdepartmental basis to meet as often as may be deemed necessary to undertake a supervisory role over Commonwealth printing and publishing as described in the Charter of Responsibilities and as has been referred to from time to time in this Report.

Membership

17.3 The Committee feels that the membership of the Board should include senior officers from appropriate Commonwealth departments. The Committee recommends:

That the Board of Review comprise an officer from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet or the Department of Administrative Services, the Public Service Board, the Australian Government Publishing Service, the Government Printing Office and such other members as may be determined from time to time by the government.

That a position of permanent secretary to the Board of Review be established and that this position and such other support staff as may be deemed necessary be provided by the AGPS.

Annual Report

17.4 The Erwin Committee recommended:

. . . that the Minister-in-Charge of the proposed publishing office should make an annual report to Parliament on the operation of the publishing office in which, inter alia, he should cite every instance in which the publishing office considered there was an unjustified departure by an author department from the standards and rules of the office.¹

¹ Erwin Committee Report, op. cit., Para 202.

17.5 This recommendation has never been implemented. In evidence, officers from the Australian Government Publishing Service informed the Committee that the publication of an annual report in the terms recommended would lead to ill-feeling between the AGPS and its clients and would directly reflect on the service nature of AGPS operations. The Committee is sympathetic to this view since it would place AGPS in the position of publicly citing differences of opinion with its clients in an annual report to Parliament in which it would be difficult for the department or authority concerned to state its defence. However, it feels that an annual report which can report departures from AGPS instructions and guidelines, and, in the case of this Report, breaches of the Charter of Responsibilities, would serve a very useful purpose. The Committee will be undertaking regular reviews of departmental publishing activities in the future and 'so undertaking the task which was seen as its prime responsibility by the earlier Joint Committee'.²

17.6 The Committee feels that the provision of an annual report by the Board of Review, which draws attention to departures from AGPS guidelines and standards and from the Charter of Responsibilities, would be of considerable value to the Committee in this area of its responsibility. The Committee would expect that the annual report would contain explanations for any departures by author bodies from the guidelines. It considers that this document would be a document for the use of the Committee and would not be tabled in Parliament. The Committee recommends:

That the proposed Board of Review report to the Joint Committee on Publications annually, and on such additional occasions as the Board of Review may deem appropriate, on:

- (a) *significant departures from AGPS circulars and the Charter of Responsibilities by departments and, where appropriate, statutory authorities;*
- (b) *differences between Commonwealth publishing agents which, within its own powers, the Board of Review is unable to resolve (together with brief comments on the matter from the respective parties involved);*
- (c) *matters concerning its function and powers where the guidance of the Committee is desired; and*
- (d) *such other matters as may be determined by the Board of Review or the Committee.*

² Departmental Publishing Activities, Report from the Joint Committee on Publications, op. cit., Para 3.

CHAPTER 18—THE CHARTER OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN COMMONWEALTH PRINTING AND PUBLISHING AGENTS

18.1 The Committee considers it most desirable that the rights and responsibilities of the various bodies associated with the printing and publishing program of the Commonwealth should be clearly set out. The Committee recommends:

That the responsibilities of the various printing and publishing agents be as set out in Chapter 18 of this Report.

The Parliament

- (1) The Government Printer shall be directly responsible to the Presiding Officers for the production and distribution of all Parliamentary publications and these shall receive precedence over other work at all times. The Parliamentary departments, either independently or through the Government Printer, shall use design, editorial and distribution facilities of the Australian Government Publishing Service, should they so desire.
- (2) The Parliamentary departments shall comply with circulars of the Australian Government Publishing Service unless exempted by the Presiding Officer or Presiding Officers, as the case may be.
- (3) In line with the practice of the House of Commons, a Resolution shall be passed at the commencement of each Session of Parliament empowering the Presiding Officers to appoint the Government Printer to carry out such printing for the Parliament as is deemed to be necessary.

The Government Printer

- (4) The Government Printer shall be responsible for:
 - (a) all Parliamentary printing;
 - (b) the printing of the urgent and confidential requirements of government; and
 - (c) print procurement for general printing items over \$500 in value.
- (5) The Government Printer shall be able to tender for any printing contract let by the AGPS.
- (6) The Government Printer shall be directly responsible to the Secretary of the Department administered by the responsible Minister. Should conflict arise between this direction and those of (1) to (3) above, the view of the Presiding Officers shall prevail.
- (7) The Government Printing Office shall be a distinct entity and all administrative support necessary for the operation of the Government Printing Office shall be the responsibility of the Government Printer.
- (8) To enable the Government Printer to carry out his responsibilities in the most efficient manner, he shall be able to adjust his staff and plant capacity within the limits imposed by the Government Printer Trust Account.
- (9) No in-house printing equipment shall be purchased or leased by departments without the consent of the Government Printer.
- (10) Unless otherwise determined by the responsible Minister, statutory authorities may not purchase or lease in-house printing equipment without prior consultation with the Government Printer.

The Australian Government Publishing Service

- (11) The Australian Government Publishing Service shall be restructured as a distinct body whose Controller shall be directly responsible to the Secretary of the Department administered by the responsible Minister. It shall be responsible for the production of the publications publishing program of all departments listed under Schedule 2 of the *Public Service Act 1922*, except the Parliamentary departments. Publications and the publishing process shall include all those items and procedures referred to in the definitions of publications and publishing at Para 1.10 of this Report. Exemption to the conditions of this paragraph may be granted by the Board of Review.
- (12) All publications produced by departments and statutory authorities classified 'for sale' shall be offered to the Australian Government Publishing Service for sales purposes.
- (13) The Australian Government Publishing Service shall be responsible for the preparation of publishing guidelines which deal with such matters as editorial and design standards, bibliographical control and the free and official issue of departmental and statutory authorities' publications. Circulars establishing these guidelines shall be adhered to by departments unless exemption is granted by the Board of Review.
- (14) The Australian Government Publishing Service shall arrange print procurement for publications of statutory authorities which are required, under statute, to be tabled in Parliament, unless exemption is granted by the Board of Review.
- (15) The Australian Government Publishing Service shall have responsibility for all design work for departmental publications, and all designers shall be located within the AGPS structure, unless exemption is granted by the Board of Review.
- (16) The Australian Government Publishing Service shall have responsibility for the distribution of departmental publications, unless exemption is granted by the Board of Review.

Departments

- (17) Within the funds appropriated by Parliament, the decision to print shall be the responsibility of the Minister concerned.
- (18) The responsibility for the written content of a departmental publication shall be that of its Minister, through his department (includes material which might contain libellous and defamatory content). The Australian Government Publishing Service may offer advice or guidance but the responsibility rests with the initiating department.
- (19) Departments shall not establish or maintain retail outlets for their publications, except with the concurrence of the responsible Minister after consultation with the Board of Review.
- (20) Departments shall arrange print procurement for general printing jobs to the value of \$500.
- (21) On matters of urgency, where disagreement occurs between a department and the Australian Government Publishing Service concerning their respective responsibilities, the view of the department shall prevail. However, the matter shall be reported to the Board of Review for possible reference to the Joint Committee on Publications.

Statutory Authorities

- (22) The decision to print and the written content of publications shall be the responsibility of statutory authorities, or, where appropriate, the relevant Minister.
- (23) Statutory authorities may use Australian Government Publishing Service facilities for their publishing programs.
- (24) The publication of all documents required by statute to be presented to Parliament shall be the responsibility of the Australian Government Publishing Service. In the event of any disagreement between the AGPS and the statutory authority, the statutory authority's will shall prevail. However, the disagreement shall be referred to the Board of Review for possible reference to the Joint Committee on Publications.
- (25) No retail outlets for publications shall be established or maintained by a statutory authority unless agreement is reached between its Minister and the responsible Minister, after consultation with the Board of Review.

The Board of Review

- (26) The Board of Review shall overview the execution of the government's printing and publishing program as referred to in the Charter of Responsibilities and in this Report.
- (27) The Board of Review shall comprise an officer from each of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet or the Department of Administrative Services, the Public Service Board, the Department of Finance, the Government Printing Office and the Australian Government Publishing Service. With the concurrence of the Joint Committee on Publications, the membership of the Board may be amended from time to time. Staffing of the Board shall be the responsibility of the AGPS.
- (28) With the concurrence of the Joint Committee on Publications, the Board of Review may vary determinations of this Charter where it considers it appropriate or justified on grounds of economy and efficiency. Such variations shall be recorded in Australian Government Publishing Service circulars.
- (29) The Board of Review each year or as often as may be determined by the Joint Committee on Publications shall present a report on its operations to the Committee which report will set out cases where departments or statutory authorities have departed from Australian Government Publishing Service procedures and guidelines or from the terms of this Charter, together with any explanation which has been forwarded to explain such divergence. The Board of Review may also report to the Joint Committee on Publications on matters concerning its functions and powers in which it seeks guidance and such other matters as it thinks appropriate.

The need for flexibility in procedures

18.2 The Committee is concerned to ensure that flexibility will exist within Commonwealth printing and publishing procedures. While the Charter is designed to establish clear and appropriate lines of responsibility, there will always be occasions where set procedures and guidelines will need to be varied to suit particular circumstances. For these reasons the in-built flexibility provided by the establishment of a Board of Review is considered essential. The clarification and establishment of responsibilities inherent in a Charter, together with the flexibility provided for by the operation of a Board of Review, should remove the uncertainty and ambiguity relating to dealings between the AGPS and its clients.

Implementation of Committee's recommendations

18.3 While, in many respects, the content of this Charter and many of the recommendations of the Report are far reaching and may attract opposition from many of the parties involved, the Committee firmly believes that a positive attitude should be taken to ensure their adoption. The Committee believes that the recommendations are in the best interests of the Commonwealth's publishing program. Ways to achieve their implementation should be investigated rather than reasons sought as to why they should not.

PART VII—OTHER MATTERS
CHAPTER 19—AWARENESS OF COMMONWEALTH
PUBLISHING PROGRAM

Bibliographical control

19.1 During the course of this Inquiry, the Committee has had its attention drawn on several occasions to the matter of bibliographic control and library deposit.

19.2 It is obvious to the Committee that the advantage of having information available to the public in printed form disappears entirely if there is no awareness that such information exists, and the means of discovering its existence are inadequate. The administrative cost of producing a publication is considerable. To the Committee there is little point in going to the trouble and expense of producing a publication if it is unknown and not readily available.

19.3 In its Report, the Erwin Committee (Para 365(b)) recommended that each body outside the control of the *Public Service Act 1922*—

shall advise the publishing office of the publications it has issued so that they may be adequately listed in the daily and monthly lists of Commonwealth publications published by that office;

The Committee strongly endorses this recommendation, and urges that it should be applied to all departments and statutory authorities. The Committee recommends:

That each publication produced by departments and statutory authorities be notified to AGPS upon its release, together with details as to the status of the document, whether it is for sale or free, and from where it can be obtained.

19.4 The Committee is aware that through ignorance or omission, departments and statutory authorities will not consistently comply with this recommendation, if implemented. The Committee will be paying close attention to this matter in further publishing inquiries and should the above recommendations be adopted, it will be seeking the support of the Board of Review in this matter.

HMSO Services Working Party

19.5 The Committee is aware that in Great Britain there exists an advisory body called the HMSO Services Working Party. Its membership comprises senior librarians and officers of HMSO who meet on frequent occasions to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. Its objectives are to keep the relationship between HMSO and the library profession as effective and harmonious as possible. Reports are issued by this body from time to time which advise HMSO users of changes in policy on matters which relate to government publishing generally. The Committee is attracted to the suggestion that such a body be established in Australia and, accordingly, recommends:

That the AGPS initiate discussions with representatives of the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services and the State Library Boards on the desirability of establishing an advisory board similar to the HMSO Services Working Party.

National Library deposit

19.6 The Committee's attention has been drawn also to the repeated failure of departments and statutory authorities to lodge copies of all their relevant publications with the National Library in the required manner.

19.7 The *Copyright Act 1968* is explicit on the requirements of departments and statutory authorities in this regard. Section 201(1) of the Act states:

The publisher of any library material that is published in Australia and in which copyright subsists under this Act shall, within one month after the publication, cause a copy of the material to be delivered at his own expense to the National Library.

19.8 The Committee recommends:

That steps be taken to ensure that departments and statutory authorities comply with the requirements of the Copyright Act 1968 in relation to library deposit.

19.9 Under the Library Deposit scheme AGPS deposits one copy of each of its publications with the National Library, and those State Libraries and university libraries which wish to be depository libraries. Currently there are twenty-five recipients. The operations of this scheme are carried out under government direction. To the Committee's knowledge no other scheme exists in which deposits or international exchange of publications takes place. By submission the Committee was advised on the exchange arrangement between Australia and New Zealand by the New Zealand Parliamentary Librarian. In part his submission states:

The means by which the arrangement is discharged on the New Zealand end is that the New Zealand Government Printer undertakes to supply to the National Library of Australia one copy of every publication which he prints for departments. The Departments further undertake to provide one copy of any material produced by them which is not printed by the Government Printer. In Australia, on the other hand, the supply responsibility rests with each Department. This seems to be the cause of numerous breakdowns in the supply operation since mailing lists, as I understand, are subject to pruning without reference to the National Library in respect of any exchange partners who may be involved. Decentralisation of the supply responsibility, therefore does not seem to be in the best interests of a smooth-running international exchange operation.

The Committee's inquiries confirmed the accuracy of this statement. The situation is unsatisfactory.

19.10 For practical purposes, any remedy to this situation should be the responsibility of the central publishing authority, namely, the AGPS. Since the activities of the AGPS in this area are not specifically related to its publishing role, any expenses incurred in this function should be recouped from Consolidated Revenue. The Committee recommends:

That all government departments and statutory authorities provide to the AGPS sufficient copies of each of their publications (which are not published through the AGPS) to meet authorised overseas exchange commitments.

That the AGPS, in conjunction with the National Library, meet authorised overseas exchange commitments from its own stocks of publications or from those forwarded by departments and statutory authorities.

That where departments or statutory authorities fail to meet bibliographic, copyright, deposit or exchange requirements, such failure be reported to the Board of Review by the AGPS.

CHAPTER 20—COPYRIGHT LAW

20.1 The Committee believes that there are many questions concerning copyright in relation to Commonwealth publications which remain unclear and in need of determination.

20.2 Furthermore, this situation is not new. As long ago as 1964 the Erwin Committee reported as follows:

Your Committee recommends that a statement be issued clearly defining:

- (a) the copyright existing over Commonwealth publications, and
- (b) the office or offices to which inquiries should be directed concerning the copyright in Commonwealth publications.¹

20.3 The Committee is of the opinion that the recommendation of the Erwin Committee in 1964 has yet to be carried out satisfactorily. Since that time the Franki Committee of Inquiry into Copyright Law on Reprographic Reproduction has given the matter further and detailed investigation. Some two years after tabling still no statement has been issued. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That as a matter of urgency the Government resolve outstanding questions of copyright of Commonwealth government publications.

That when the questions concerning copyright have been resolved by the government, all necessary information be printed in the appropriate position in each government publication.

¹ Erwin Committee Report, op. cit., Para 340.

CHAPTER 21—INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

The Parliament

21.1 Information retrieval for Members of Parliament is currently restricted to a manual extraction of research material from Commonwealth publications and other research material by the House Departments for their respective Members, by the Parliamentary Library and by Members of Parliament and their private staffs. To date, no material which has been stored on computer readable tape is readily available for Senators' and Members' research. The Commonwealth Parliament is well behind its overseas, and, to some extent, its State counterparts in this regard.

21.2 During a previous Inquiry¹ the Committee's attention was drawn to the existence of detailed legislative information stored in computers at the Attorney-General's Department. The Committee was advised that *Hansard* debates dating back to 1973 were also stored on computer readable magnetic tape located at the Government Printing Office. While the Committee understands that the Presiding Officers have initiated moves to make some of this information available to the Parliament, it would prefer to see the rate of progress increased. If the Parliament is to cope with the increasing complexity of legislation in the 20th century, if it is to be able to digest the material contained in the enormous volume of printed matter which is continually being published and thrust at Senators and Members, then computers must be used to store, collate and dissect this information and make it readily available to them in a convenient and readable form. The Committee looks forward to the day when legislative proposals and complete background information on such proposals, the massive amount of information contained in the Parliamentary Papers Series, and the wealth of material contained in *Hansard* can be instantly provided to Members of Parliament through on-line computers. The Committee is firmly of the view that this support should be provided to Members of Parliament and recommends:

That the Presiding Officers continue their examination of the most suitable computer information retrieval system for introduction into the Commonwealth Parliament.

That all necessary resources be provided to ensure that the introduction of a suitable computer information retrieval system is introduced into the Parliament at the earliest practical time.

¹ Publication of Commonwealth Acts, Statutory Rules and Legislation of the Territories, Report from the Joint Committee on Publications, op. cit.

CHAPTER 22—THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

22.1 The Committee is determined to scrutinise closely the publishing programs of departments in order to ensure that the adopted recommendations of the Report are implemented. To this end, the Committee intends to report regularly on departmental publishing in the manner of a previous Inquiry.¹

22.2 In order to assist it to investigate and fulfil the responsibilities with which it is charged by the Parliament, the Committee believes that the Standing Orders relating to the Committee should be amended to provide it with greater flexibility and ease of movement. Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

That the Standing Orders of both Houses of Parliament be amended to enable the Joint Committee on Publications to:

- (i) *move from place to place; and*
- (ii) *form itself into a sub-committee when considered necessary.*

J. C. Hodges, M.P.,
Chairman

November 1978
Parliament House
CANBERRA A.C.T.

¹ Departmental Publishing Activities, Report from the Joint Committee on Publications, op. cit.

Appendix I LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

Written submissions were received by the following persons:

- No. 1 Mr J. W. East, Queensland
- No. 2 Mr R. Snashall, Tasmania
- No. 3 Mr N. K. Vallance, Tasmania
- No. 4 Mr J. Cook, G. Fraser, M. Nimon, Library Association of Australia, South Australia
- No. 5 Mr J. Elliott, University of Queensland
- No. 6 Mr N. H. Snedden, Australian Capital Territory
- No. 7 Sir Zelman Cowen, Vice-Chancellor, University of Queensland
- No. 8 Mrs J. Rowley, Tasmania
- No. 9 Mr D. Calvert, Tasmania
- No. 10 Mrs G. M. Webb, Launceston Matriculation College, Tasmania
- No. 11 Mr R. W. Johns, Personnel Superintendent, The Electricity Trust of South Australia
- No. 12 Miss J. M. Cooper, Teacher-Librarian, Holland Park High School, Queensland
- No. 13 Mrs S. Wickenden, Librarian, Freehill, Hollingdale & Page, Solicitors & Notaries, Sydney, N.S.W.
- No. 14 Mr A. M. L. Ngwenya, Librarian, Taroona High School, Tasmania
- No. 15 Mr L. R. James, Secretary, Chief Librarians Council, Victoria
- No. 16 Dr K. King, South Australia
- No. 17 Mr G. C. A. Reid, Western Australia
- No. 18 Miss M. Cuzens, Senior Librarian, Engineering Library, Telecom Australia, Victoria
- No. 19 Mrs R. A. Balmford, Executive Director, Leo Cussen Institute For Continuing Legal Education, Victoria
- No. 20 Ms C. D'Ath, Librarian, Q.U.F. Industries Ltd, Queensland
- No. 21 Mr G. Thompson, Victoria
- No. 22 Ms M. Gemenis, Chairman, Data Services, The Library Association of Australia, Sydney, N.S.W.
- No. 23 Mr E. J. Burge, Secretary, South Australian Branch, The Library Association of Australia, South Australia
- No. 24 Mr Peter Cullen, Consultant in Government and the Parliament, Canberra, A.C.T.
- No. 25 Mr G. C. Sansom, Administrative & Research Officer, Illawarra Regional Organisation of Councils, N.S.W.
- No. 26 Mr J. E. Scrivener, University Librarian, University of Tasmania
- No. 27 M. J. Miller, Canberra, A.C.T.
- No. 28 Mr H. D. Joyce, South Australia
- No. 29 Mr J. E. Forster, State Secretary, Australasian Society of Engineers, Tasmania
- No. 30 Town Clerk, City of Nunawading Municipal Offices, Victoria
- No. 31 Mrs H. M. M. Emery, Librarian, Utah Development Company, Queensland
- No. 32 Mr Bob Hoey, Executive Committee, Queensland Conservation Council
- No. 33 Ms J. Thomas, Victoria
- No. 34 The Shell Company of Australia Limited, Victoria
- No. 35 Messrs R. Chapman, B. Davis, C. Sharman, The University of Tasmania
- No. 36 Ms G. Batman, Sydney, N.S.W.
- No. 37 Mr L. C. Noakes, Director, Bureau of Mineral Resources, Geology & Geophysics, Canberra, A.C.T.
- No. 38 Mr P. J. Boyce, Department of Government, University of Queensland
- No. 39 Mr H. J. Souter, Secretary, Australian Council of Trade Unions, Victoria
- No. 40 Mrs S. M. Grant, Deputy Librarian, Murray Park College of Advanced Education, South Australia
- No. 41 Ms D. Tarte, Secretary, Australian Littoral Society, University of Queensland
- No. 42 S. E. Casson, Parliamentary Librarian, Parliamentary Library, South Australia
- No. 43 Mr S. Jordan, Secretary, Printing & Kindred Industries Union (A.C.T. Branch), Canberra, A.C.T.
- No. 44 Ms K. Bevan, Acquisitions Librarian, Adelaide College of Advanced Education

No. 45 Mr Allan Brown, Queensland
 No. 46 Mr David White
 No. 47 Mr G. E. Gardiner, President, Conservation Council of South Australia Inc, South Australia
 No. 48 G. Speers, Institute Librarian, Preston Institute of Technology, Education Resource Centre, Victoria
 No. 49 Mr R. H. Braby, Senior Lecturer in Economics, Preston Institute of Technology, Victoria
 No. 50 Mr D. H. Borchardt, Chief Librarian, La Trobe University, Victoria
 No. 51 Mr D. A. Hill, Manager, Government Publication Centre, Brisbane, Queensland
 No. 52 W. L. Brown, State Librarian, The State Library of Tasmania
 No. 53 GAF (N.S.W.) Pty. Ltd., Sydney, N.S.W.
 No. 54 Staff of Geography Department, University of Queensland
 No. 55 Mr Ian Yates, Secretary-General, Australian Council of Social Service, N.S.W.
 No. 56 A. D. McKie, Acting Chief Librarian, South Australian Institute of Technology
 No. 57 Mrs G. Lee, Executive Director, the Northern Tasmanian Regional Council for Social Development, Tasmania
 No. 58 Mr V. B. McMullan, Federal Secretary-Treasurer, Australian Public Service Association (Fourth Division Officers), Melbourne, Victoria
 No. 59 Mr B. J. Samuels, Community Resource Officer, Port Adelaide High School, Queenstown, South Australia
 No. 60 Mr R. G. Anderson, Director, Tasmanian Conservation Trust Inc., Hobart, Tasmania
 No. 61 Miss J. McGovern, Librarian, Parliamentary Library, Melbourne, Victoria
 No. 62 The Manager, Rupert Information & Referral Services, Canberra, A.C.T.
 No. 63 Mr E. H. Wilkinson, Librarian, Macquarie University, North Ryde, N.S.W.
 No. 64 Ms Joy Nichols, Acting Deputy State Librarian, State Library of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland
 No. 65 Mr R. Sharman, State Librarian, The Library Board of Western Australia, Perth, W.A.
 No. 66 Mr R. K. Olding, State Librarian, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia
 No. 67 Mr G. J. Inns, Director-General, Premier's Department, Adelaide, South Australia
 No. 68 Mr W. R. McManis, Chatswood, N.S.W.
 No. 69 Dr R. L. Cope, Parliamentary Librarian, Parliamentary Library, Sydney, N.S.W.
 No. 70 Mr V. Crittenden, Librarian, Canberra College of Advanced Education, Canberra, A.C.T.
 No. 71 Professor G. R. Manton, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria
 No. 72 Mr I. W. Barns, National Director, The Printing and Allied Trades Employers' Federation of Australia, Sydney, N.S.W.
 No. 73 Mr David Green, Acting Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Liaison and Public Relations Branch, Department of Education, Canberra, A.C.T.
 No. 74 Ms B. J. Driscoll, Secretary, Tasmanian Teacher-Librarians Association (Northern Branch), Launceston, Tasmania
 No. 75 Sir Hugh Ennor, Secretary, Department of Science, Canberra, A.C.T.
 No. 76 Mr Frank Gardiner, Camberwell, Victoria
 No. 77 Mr Martin Andrew, North Adelaide, South Australia
 No. 78 Mr D. A. Hill, Manager, Government Publication Centre, Brisbane, Queensland
 No. 79 Professor H. K. Lücke, Professor of Law, The University of Adelaide, South Australia
 No. 80 Mr J. Macallister, Assistant State Librarian, Technical Services, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, N.S.W.
 No. 81 Mr H. Coxon, North Adelaide, South Australia
 No. 82 Mrs H. G. Vimpani, President, The National Council of Women of South Australia Inc., Adelaide, South Australia
 No. 83 Mr K. C. McDonzie, Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, Melbourne, Victoria
 No. 84 Ms Maria Gemenis, Chairman, N.S.W. Special Libraries Sectional Group, The Library Association of Australia, Sydney, N.S.W.
 No. 85 Graphic Artists employed in Commonwealth Government Departments, Canberra, A.C.T.

No. 86 Mr K. M. Stodden, Administrative Officer, Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, Carlton South, Victoria
 No. 87 Mr K. A. Handreck, Information Officer, CSIRO, Division of Soils, Adelaide, South Australia
 No. 88 Mr W. D. Thorn, Director, Australian National Social Sciences Library, National Library of Australia, Canberra, A.C.T.
 No. 89 Mr D. J. Robinson, G.W. Robinson & Co., Edwardstown, South Australia
 No. 90 Mr H. de S. C. MacLean, Chief Librarian, General Assembly Library, Parliament House, Wellington, New Zealand
 No. 91 Professor R. F. Henderson, Director, Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria
 No. 92 Professor R. Sackville, Professor of Law, Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales, Sydney, N.S.W.
 No. 93 Mr R. N. Bonnett, National Secretary, Australian Association of Independent Businesses Ltd, Canberra, A.C.T.

Appendix II

LIST OF WITNESSES

Atkinson, Mr F. D. Government Printer, Victorian Government Printing Office, Melbourne, Victoria

Baldock, Mr G. H. Officer-in-Charge, Publications Central Office, Department of Science, Canberra, A.C.T.

Barns, Mr I. W. National Director, Printing and Allied Trades Employers' Federation of Australia, Sydney, N.S.W.

Barry, Mr A. B. Director, Secretariat (Management Services), Department of Science, Canberra, A.C.T.

Borchardt, Mr D. H. Chief Librarian, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria

Bourke, Mr M. Rupert Information and Referral Services, Dickson, A.C.T.

Braby, Mr R. Senior Lecturer in Economics, Preston Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Victoria

Cochran, Mr I. C. Senior Parliamentary Officer, House of Representatives and Secretary, Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications, Canberra, A.C.T.

Connors, Mr J. W. A.C.T. Branch of the Australian Public Service Association (Fourth Division Officers), Canberra, A.C.T.

Cullen, Mr P. Director, Peter Cullen Pty Ltd, Canberra, A.C.T.

Cuzens, Miss M. Senior Librarian, Telecom Australia, Melbourne, Victoria

Dodds, Mr G. P. President, A.C.T. Branch, Printing and Kindred Industries Union, Canberra, A.C.T.

Erwin, The Hon. G. D. Formerly Chairman, Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications, and former Chairman, Joint Committee on Publications, Canberra, A.C.T.

Faulkner, Mr D. P. Senior Investigating Officer, South Australian Public Service Board, Adelaide, South Australia

Fisher, Mr R. C. Consultant, Printing and Allied Trades Employers' Federation of Australia, Sydney, N.S.W.

Foster, Mrs P. F. Research Officer, Australian Public Service Association (Fourth Division Officers), Melbourne, Victoria

Green, Mr D. Acting Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Liaison and Public Relations Branch, Department of Education, Canberra, A.C.T.

Greenwood, Mr L. J. Commonwealth Public Service Graphic Artists, Canberra, A.C.T.

Hemingway, Mr C. Assistant Director, Client Service and Print Procurement, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, A.C.T.

Ihleln, Mr G. R. Senior Industrial/Research Officer, Australian Public Service Association (Fourth Division Officers), Melbourne, Victoria

Jordan, Mr S. Secretary, A.C.T. Branch, Printing and Kindred Industries Union, Canberra, A.C.T.

McCloskey, Mrs K. Acquisitions Officer, Engineering Library, Telecom Australia, Melbourne, Victoria

McGovern, Miss J. Parliamentary Library Librarian, Melbourne, Victoria

Mehegan, Mr W. A. Victorian Branch of Australian Public Service Association (Fourth Division), Melbourne, Victoria

Miller, Miss A. E. Government Publications Librarian, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria

Newton-Tabrett, Mr M. J. Commonwealth Public Service Graphic Artists, Canberra, A.C.T.

Nott, Mr P. A. First Assistant Secretary, Information Services Division, Department of Administrative Services, Canberra, A.C.T.

Palmer, Mr A. R.. Acting Secretary, Department of Administrative Services, Canberra, A.C.T.

Quill, Mr R. Head, Materials No. 1 Section of the Language Teaching Branch, Department of Education, Canberra, A.C.T.

Reilly, Mr C. T. Publications Officer, Bureau of Meteorology, Canberra, A.C.T.

Renwick, Mr A. Acting Assistant Director (Operations), Bureau of Mineral Resources, Canberra, A.C.T.

Shurman, Mr B. P. Director Publishing, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, A.C.T.

Simkin, Mr J. E. Chief Librarians' Council, Melbourne, Victoria

Thompson, Mr C. J. Government Printer, Australian Government Publishing Service, Government Printing Office, Canberra, A.C.T.

Webb, Mr R. S. National Vice-President, Printing and Allied Trades Employers' Federation of Australia, Sydney, N.S.W.

Webster, Mr C. A. Assistant Secretary (Management Services), Department of Science, Canberra, A.C.T.

Wells, Mr P. Publications Editor, Public Relations Branch, Department of Education, Canberra, A.C.T.

West, Mr D. Government Printer, New South Wales Government Printing Office, Sydney, N.S.W.

Westaway, Mr P. Assistant Secretary, Department of Administrative Services, Canberra, A.C.T.

Wood, Mr J. T. D. Editor of Rupert Information and Referral Services, Dickson, A.C.T.

Woolman, Mr D. J. Director and Government Printer, Department of Services and Supply, Government Printing Division, Adelaide, South Australia

Appendix III

RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY AND GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS (ERWIN COMMITTEE REPORT)

No. Recommendation

A Government Publisher

1. That a central government publishing office be established to undertake the publishing function of departments.
2. That the publishing office be the sole publisher of all departmental publications.
3. That the new office be called the Australian Government Publishing Service.
4. That the Minister-in-Charge of the publishing office should make an annual report to Parliament on the operation of the publishing office in which, *inter alia*, he should cite every instance in which the publishing office considered there was an unjustified departure by an author department from the standards and rules of the office.

Authority to publish

6. That the decision as to what a department may publish should be the responsibility of the Minister concerned and that there should be no other departmental authority or committee to approve or veto such a decision.

Style and Format

7. That Commonwealth publications be published at the highest practicable standard having regard to their intended function, contents and potential readers.
8. That the publishing office be responsible for the development and administration of principles and policies regarding standards of presentation and printing of publications.
9. That in the event of a disagreement between the publishing office and a department concerning the presentation and printing of a publication, the view of the author department shall prevail and that in such an event, the author department will be expected, if called upon, to justify its stand to Parliament through the proposed Joint Committee on Publications.
11. That in addition to the facilities available to departments in the production of publicity and information material from News and Information Bureau, the publishing office be equipped to provide technical advice to departments on the format, paper size and quality, printing methods and typography for all other publications.

Potential demand

14. That, subject to departmental requirements being met, the publishing office determine the total number of copies to be printed or processed of all publications of which copies are produced for sale.
15. That, in the case of publications for which there is no provision for copies to be sold, the decision as to the number printed should remain with the department.

Sale of Publications

16. That the publishing office (a) should be responsible for developing and administering uniform policies in regard to the sale and pricing of publications, and (b) should be the body to determine whether or not a publication should be classed as saleable.

Printing

17. That the publishing office:
 - (a) be responsible for the printing, or letting out by contract of printing, of all departmental publications, including those relevant functions at present performed by the Commonwealth Stores Supply and Tender Board and other departmental Tender Boards.
 - (b) give close attention to the question of the scope and extent of the work that can efficiently be undertaken by the Commonwealth printing works in Canberra.
 - (c) strictly observe the principle that parliamentary requirements must have precedence over other work at all times.
 - (d) establish sound and clear-cut priorities for the non-parliamentary work performed in Canberra.

Departmental printing units

19. That the departmental printing units should first obtain the advice of the publishing office before ordering new equipment or extending the scope of their work.

Distribution

20. That the control of the distribution of publications to 'target groups' of recipients remain with the author departments and, where possible, the facilities of the publishing office be used in this distribution.
21. That all other distribution be the responsibility of the publishing office.
22. That the publishing office:
 - (a) draw up uniform policies for the free issue of saleable publications.
 - (b) be responsible for ensuring that all publications are despatched by the most efficient and economical means.

Mail order service

24. That the publishing office develop with all possible speed a reliable and efficient service for mail-order customers.

Lists of publications

25. That the publishing office:
 - (a) publish daily and monthly a list of the Commonwealth publications issued during the past 24 hours, or month, respectively.
 - (b) show in these lists:
 - the titles of the publications together with supporting bibliographical details, the sale price of the publication and the cost of postage on them, the subscription rates for the various government periodicals and official publications, where and how the publications can be obtained
 - (c) include similar details of the publications of statutory authorities in these lists.

Bookshops

26. That, as a trial, the publishing office establish a bookshop in a capital city for the sale of Commonwealth publications, and, if successful, that bookshops be established in other capital cities.
27. That, consequent on the establishment of Commonwealth bookshops, the States be invited to use the facilities of the bookshops for the sale of their own publications.
28. That stocks of publications be sent to the bookshops with the least delay and air freighted, when thought necessary.

Publications of other Governments and the United Nations

29. That the publishing office make every endeavour to secure the Australian agency for the publications of other Governments and such bodies as the United Nations and its agencies.

Depository libraries

30. That certain libraries should be designated as depositories for all Commonwealth publications.
31. That the Government seek the advice of the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services and the State Library Boards when compiling its list of depository libraries.

Exchange of Commonwealth publications with overseas countries

32. That the publishing office provide the publications needed to fulfil the National Library's exchange arrangements and that the publishing office be the responsible authority for the transmission of such publications.
33. That the Commonwealth bodies operating outside the Public Service Act be required to supply the publishing office with sufficient copies of their publications to meet Australia's international exchange obligations and the needs of depository libraries.

Imprint of Commonwealth publications

55. That an imprint stating concisely the name of the publisher and the printer should appear on all Commonwealth publications.

Copyright on Commonwealth publications

58. That a statement be issued, clearly defining:
 - (a) the copyright existing over Commonwealth publications, and
 - (b) the office or offices to which inquiries should be directed concerning the copyright in Commonwealth publications.

A continuing parliamentary review

67. That a Joint Committee be appointed in each Parliament with power:

- (a) to perform the function of the existing Printing Committees,
- (b) to review the publications of Parliament and departments, their printing, publication and distribution,
- (c) to send for persons, papers and records.

Appendix IV

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING SERVICE
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURAL VARIATIONS 1969-1977**

<i>Date of Variation</i>	<i>Administrative Structural Variations</i>	<i>Reasons for Variation</i>
June 1969	The Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS) was created as an outsider to the Department of the Treasury and assumed responsibility for the Government Printing Office, the Australian Government Stores and Tender Board (AGSTB) and the Australian Government Advertising Service (AGAS).	Cabinet Decision Administrative Arrangement Order
July 1970	Publishing Branch of AGPS established.	Administrative Arrangement Order
March 1971	AGPS transferred to the Department of the Vice President of the Executive Council.	Administrative Arrangement Order
May 1971	AGPS transferred to the Department of Environment, Aborigines and the Arts.	Administrative Arrangement Order
December 1972	AGPS transferred to the Department of the Media.	Administrative Arrangement Order
March 1973	AGPS transferred to the Information Division, Department of the Media.	Departmental Reorganisation
March 1973	AGAS transferred to the Department of the Media, Information Division.	Departmental Reorganisation
July 1975	AGPS Publication and Inquiry Centres transferred to the Australian Office of Information.	Departmental Reorganisation
July 1975	Information Division disbanded.	Departmental Reorganisation
December 1975	AGPS transferred to the Department of Administrative Services.	Administrative Arrangement Order
July 1976	Publication and Inquiry Centres transferred back to AGPS.	Departmental Reorganisation
July 1976	Australian Government Gazette and Directory transferred to AGPS.	Departmental Reorganisation
July 1976	Ministerial Document Service transferred to AGPS.	Departmental Reorganisation
July 1976	Australian Government Stores and Tender Board transferred to the Office of the Purchasing Commission.	Departmental Reorganisation
January 1977	Reorganisation of the Department of Administrative Services—AGPS transferred to the newly created Information Services Division.	Departmental Reorganisation

Appendix V

STAFF, AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING SERVICE 1970-1978

Branch	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	30 June 1978
Publishing	50	95	124	180	206	*166	†201	201	199
					(+8)	(+4)	(+1)	(+1)	(+1)
Printing	653	616	693	721	770	808	760	745	747
					(+5)	(+4)			
Management Services	62	69	94	109	136	159	127	125	128
	(+7)	(+13)	(+12)	(+10)	(+10)	(+11)	(+12)	(+8)	(+9)
Total	765	780	911	1,010	1,112	1,133	1,088	1,071	1,074
	(+7)	(+13)	(+12)	(+10)	(+19)	(+23)	(+13)	(+9)	(+10)

(+) Part time employees.

* On 1 July 1975 Publication and Inquiry Centres transferred from AGPS to Australian Office of Information.
 † On 1 July 1976 Publication and Inquiry Centres transferred back to AGPS, plus Ministerial Document Service and Gazette.

Appendix VI

PRINTING WORK HANDLED BY THE AGPS 1971-72 to 1977-78

A. Work allocated by the Publishing Section AGPS

(i) Value of work allocated—by product—

Year	General printing items		Publication items		Total No. of items	Total value
		Value		Value		
1971-72	1,053	\$ 3,160,879	2,788	\$ 2,751,851	3,841	\$ 5,912,730
1972-73	1,593	2,717,500	2,026	3,827,856	3,619	6,145,356
1973-74	1,526	4,104,236	2,630	5,937,574	4,156	10,041,811
1974-75	899*	6,751,700	2,560	7,402,774	3,459	14,154,474
1975-76	579	2,736,432	2,526	6,696,064	3,105	9,432,496
1976-77	307	4,741,434	2,614	8,774,812	2,921	13,516,246
1977-78	317	4,691,681	2,386	6,507,775	2,703	11,199,456

(ii) Value of work allocated—by production centres—

Year	Government Printer	State Government Printers	Commercial printers	Total value	Allocated Government Printer
	\$	\$	\$	\$	%
1971-72	1,666,076	741,782	3,504,872	5,912,730	28.2
1972-73	1,161,392	355,351	4,628,613	6,145,356	18.9
1973-74	1,173,745	285,564	8,582,502	10,041,811	11.7
1974-75	2,480,011	632,084	11,042,379	14,154,474	17.5
1975-76	2,248,707	258,450	6,925,339	9,432,496	23.8
1976-77	5,014,527	202,744	8,298,975	13,516,246	37.0
1977-78	4,350,250	342,484	6,506,722	11,199,456	38.8

* From the end of 1973-74 the Publishing Section relinquished all small general printing work (insufficient resources to handle).

B. Total work produced at Government Printing Office

Year	Publications and general work allocated from Publishing Section	Publications and general work received direct from Departments	Total sales
	\$	\$	\$
1971-72	1,666,076	4,651,718	6,317,794
1972-73	1,162,392	5,731,423	6,892,815
1973-74	1,173,745	7,155,463	8,329,208
1974-75	2,480,011	9,235,252	11,715,263
1975-76	2,248,707	11,179,465	13,428,172
1976-77	5,014,527	10,682,713	15,697,240
1977-78	4,350,250	13,435,400	17,785,650

C. Total work handled through AGPS

Year	Government Printing Office total sales	Work allocated to commercial and State Government Printers	Total
	\$	\$	\$
1971-72	6,317,794	4,246,654	10,564,448
1972-73	6,892,815	4,983,964	11,876,779
1973-74	8,329,208	8,868,066	17,197,274
1974-75	11,715,263	11,674,463	23,389,726
1975-76	13,428,152	7,183,789	20,611,941
1976-77	15,697,240	8,501,719	24,198,959
1977-78	17,785,650	6,849,206	24,634,856

Appendix VII
SURVEY OF DEPARTMENTAL STAFF (INCLUDING AGPS) INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, 1978

Designation group—	Occupational group								Total	AGPS staff not in total
	Editorial	Liaison	Copy preparation	Design	Image preparation	Print production	Distribution	Micro-graphics		
Division 2—										
Division 3—										
Clerical/Administrative	115	40	12	2	1	23	27	2	222	67
Professional	68	5	3	6	..	1	3	..	86	4
Other . . . . .	..	..	..	19	..	..	..	..	19	12
Technical . . . . .	..	1	..	3	..	..	..	..	4	..
Total Third	183	46	15	30	1	24	30	2	531	83
Division 4—										
Artsian . . . . .	..	..	..	6	144	340	..	..	490	437
Clerical support	10	10	34	3	1	247	162	22	489	278
Stores/Transport . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	23	8	..	31	31
Keyboard/data entry . . . . .	..	..	64	..	6	..	..	2	72	7
Hospital . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other . . . . .	..	..	..	12	1	32	2	3	50	32
Technical	4	1	..	21	..	2	..	..	28	2
Total Fourth	14	11	98	42	152	644	172	27	1,160	787
Total	197	57	113	72	153	668	202	29	1,491	..
AGPS staff not in total	10	19	6	12	150	370	94	9	..	870

Notes:
 (1) The summary excludes the Attorney-General's Department which submitted a nil return and the Department of Defence which reported only printing staff of 105.
 (2) Parliamentary Departments were not surveyed.
 As the tabulations are based on questionnaires completed at various levels in departments the accuracy of the figures could be affected by varying interpretations of the questions asked. Departments were asked to list only full-time staff employed under the Public Service Act who spent at least 70 per cent of their time on publications work. Authors and their support staff are not included.