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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

REPORT

relating to the requirement for

THE ANNUAL REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

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COMMITTEE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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Mr J.M. Spender, Q.C., M.P.

Clerk to the Committee

Mr L.M. Barlin



REPORT

1. The resolutions adopted by the House of Representatives on 9 October 1984 am, amended on 21 March 1985 and 13 February 1986, require each Member of the House to -

- (a) provide a statement of registrable interests to the Registrar of Members' Interests within 28 days of making an oath or affirmation and
- (b) notify the Registrar of any alteration of those interests within 28 days of that alteration occurring.

In addition, the resolutions require the provision of further statements of interests within 28 days of the commencement of the first period of sittings in each subsequent calendar year while remaining a Member of the House. Having reviewed the requirements in conjunction with the preparation of the first completed Register of Members' Interests, the Committee believes that the additional requirement for the provision of annual statements of interests is unjustified, costly and an unnecessary burden on Members.

2. Since alterations of interests are required to be notified within 28 days of their occurrence, the Register is revised regularly and up-to-date interests of Members reflected. Provision of return forms within 28 days of the commencement of sittings in each later calendar year would yield only the information already available. It is recommended therefore that the requirement for the provision of annual statements should be repealed.

3. The Committee also draws to the attention of the House the fact that unless the resolution is amended, Members of the present Parliament who have only just completed their statements will be required to complete further statements early in the New Year. Whilst this situation has been brought about by the late commencement of the registration arrangements, it further illustrates the unnecessary burden which would be placed upon Members.

4. The Committee is concerned also at the significant cost incurred in producing copies of the completed Register. The first Register which is being tabled concurrently with this Report consists of 1056 pages. To satisfy the anticipated demand from Members, Senators, the media and other interested persons for the initial Register, the Committee felt obliged to have 360 copies of the Register reproduced. Whilst this number is 61 less than the number normally required for distribution after tabling, reproduction of the Register in these numbers remains a very significant cost both in terms of materials and labour. The Committee believes that the House may wish to consider the extent of the availability of copies of the Register when reviewing the existing requirements.

R.E. KLUGMAN
CHAIRMAN

14 August 1986