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JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS
REVIEW OF THE COST AND DISTRIBUTION
OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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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 Special Reports of Committee:

<u>Report relating to the distribution and pricing of Parliamentary Publications</u>	Parl. Paper 153/1971
<u>Report relating to departmental publishing activities</u>	Parl. Paper 285/1972
<u>Report relating to the Pink Pages advertising contract for the Victorian telephone directories</u>	Parl. Paper 175/1972
<u>Inquiry into the purpose, scope and distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series</u>	Parl. Paper 216/1977
<u>Inquiry into the publication of Commonwealth Acts, Statutory Rules and Legislation of the Territories</u>	Parl. Paper 335/1978
<u>The Australian Government Publishing Service and its role in Commonwealth Printing and Publishing 1964-1978</u>	Parl. Paper 335/1978
<u>Annual Reports of Commonwealth Departments and Statutory Authorities</u>	Parl. Paper 211/1979

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¹ Appointed 26 May 1986.

² Discharged from attendance on Committee 26 May 1986.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Content of the Parliamentary Papers Series (Chapter 2)

The Joint Committee recommends that:

- the documents comprising the Australian Treaty Series should not be recommended for printing (page 5).
- reports of delegates to conferences and international visits should not be recommended for printing (page 6).
- all parliamentary committee reports other than final reports on an inquiry or final reports on aspects of the inquiry, should not be recommended for printing (page 6).
- ad hoc committees of inquiry reports should continue to be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series except when the historical or political interest is limited to the short term (page 7).

Accordingly, the Joint Committee recommends the publishing guidelines be revised to read:

- (i) that all reports, returns and statements of departments, authorities, Parliamentary and ad hoc inquiries and royal commissions which are presented to Parliament be recommended for printing;
- (ii) the previous resolution is not intended to include interim annual reports of departments and authorities nor reports of unfinished Parliamentary inquiries and reports of ad hoc inquiries with short term interest (page 8);
- (iii) papers which are regularly presented and subsequently printed as Parliamentary Papers should continue to be recommended for printing on those occasions when they constitute a 'nil' return; and
- (iv) wherever possible, the reports of the Auditor-General which are presented in conjunction with annual reports and financial statements of statutory bodies be included in the one printed document with those reports and statements (page 8).

Production of Pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers Series (Chapter 3)

The Joint Committee recommends that:

- the standards relating to the production of the cover of Class I reports be upgraded so that two colour designs may be included and that Class II be dropped from the production standards (page 13).

- the current Class II standards be applied only to reports of those government agencies competing in the commercial sector (page 13).
- the guidelines which are to be presented to Parliament pursuant to section 27(7) of the Public Service Act 1922 include these references and that the guidelines relating to reporting standards of statutory authorities also incorporate them (page 14).
- a system of two edition annual reports be available to those organisations wishing to publish an annual promotional document (page 14).
- the edition which includes the financial statements and Auditor-General's report, and meets the other guidelines under the Public Service Act 1922 or those for statutory authorities only be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series (page 14).
- the Government consider the introduction of an Annual Reports Act as a means of ensuring that federally funded bodies report on their responsibilities to the Parliament and do so within the appropriate production standards (page 15).
- 'camera-ready' production of reports which readily fall within the Parliamentary Papers publishing guidelines should be produced in accordance with the AGPS requirements (page 16).
- alternative technology may be used in the production of material that is not required to be read with the body of a report provided the Joint Committee is consulted prior to production (page 17).

Distribution of Pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers Series (Chapter 3)

The Joint Committee recommends that:

- secondary schools no longer be eligible for the distribution of pamphlet copies of Parliamentary Papers (page 18).
- the members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and newspapers be excluded from the free distribution guidelines. (page 19)
- overseas addresses that are the main national or parliamentary library of a country be admitted on request to the free distribution list, if an exchange arrangement exists with the National Library of Australia (page 20).
- the stock of pamphlet Parliamentary Papers made available to AGPS be reduced from 100 to 25 or sufficient to meet subscribers' standing orders (page 21).

- free distribution to Federal Political Parties should be on the basis that the party has been registered by the Australian Electoral Commission (page 21).

Accordingly, the Joint Committee recommends that the distribution guidelines be revised as follows:

that libraries of States, State parliaments, municipalities, tertiary education institutions, and Commonwealth departments (or in absence, the Secretary); and foreign embassies, political parties which are registered under the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, the main national or parliamentary library of a country which has an exchange arrangement with the National Library of Australia, and appropriate addresses as determined by the Presiding Officers which are consistent with the terms of this recommendation, be entitled to be supplied with one free copy of each of the undermentioned publications, upon request:

Parliamentary Papers, Standing Orders of both Houses and the Short Description of Business and Procedures of the House of Representatives

That trade, business, employer, employee, professional, commercial and similar organisations including members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and newspapers, be not entitled to receive free distribution of the above (page 21).

Production of the Bound Volumes of the Series (Chapter 4)

The Joint Committee recommends that:

- AGPS, when supplying the pamphlet copies of Parliamentary Papers, provide a cumulative listing of all Papers issued in that year and a list of outstanding papers from the previous year (page 25).
- any production of the Parliamentary Papers Series in microfiche should be accompanied by the appropriate amendments to copyright legislation to enable 100% reproduction of a paper in the restricted circumstances described (page 27).
- the number of sets of bound volumes prepared annually be reduced to 27 (page 29).

Distribution of the Bound Volumes of the Series (Chapter 4)

The Joint Committee recommends that:

- the practice of maintaining reserved stocks of bound volumes cease (page 30).

- AGPS dispose of the current reserve stocks by providing missing stock to current recipients and other interested parties (page 30).
- free distribution to the House departments (the Departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives) and the Parliamentary Library be maintained (page 30).
- the National Library of Australia should be maintained as a recipient of two sets of bound volumes as it houses Australia's national collection (page 31).
- the Australian Archives remain on the free distribution list. (page 31)
- free distribution be maintained to each of the State Parliamentary Libraries and the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly (page 31).
- State Libraries be maintained on the free distribution list (page 31).
- the issue of bound volumes be restricted to those overseas libraries that are the national or parliamentary library of a country which has an exchange arrangement with the National Library of Australia (page 31).
- the following categories be removed from the free distribution list for bound volumes:

Commonwealth Departments
 Municipal Libraries
 Universities
 Colleges of Advanced Education
 Commonwealth Parliament Offices
 Overseas Libraries [which are not
 national or parliamentary libraries
 that have an exchange arrangement
 with the National Library of Australia
 (page 31)].

Accordingly, the Joint Committee recommends that the guidelines for the distribution of bound volumes be revised to read:

That, unless the Presiding Officers otherwise determine, the National Library of Australia, Australian Archives, all State and State Parliamentary libraries, and a country's national or parliamentary library with an exchange arrangement with the National Library of Australia, be eligible to receive one free set of bound volumes of Parliamentary Papers upon request (page 32).

Implementing the Recommendations (Chapter 5)

The Joint Committee recommends that:

- the following recommendations can be implemented on Government approval;
 - . camera-ready production (Chapter 3)
 - . alternative technology (Chapter 3)
 - . cumulative list of papers (Chapter 4)

- the consistency within each year be maintained by implementing the following recommendations at the commencement of a Series;
 - . publishing guidelines relating to treaties, reports of delegations, Parliamentary inquiries and ad hoc committee reports. (Chapter 2)
 - . guidelines for the distribution of pamphlet copies relating to secondary schools, Parliamentary Press Gallery and newspapers, overseas recipients and 'for sale' copies. (Chapter 3)
 - . production standards and the content of annual reports. (Chapter 3)

- the recommendation reducing the number of sets of bound volumes and the associated changes to the free distribution be implemented in the binding of the 1983 sets of Papers. Further, the Joint Committee recommends that the existing run-ons be offered to those organizations that will cease to receive free sets of bound volumes.

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CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO INQUIRY

This Report and its recommendations represent the Joint Committee on Publications' effort to balance the competing concerns that confronted it during the review into the cost and distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series and at the same time to bring cost efficiency to the Series.

Background of Committee

The Joint Committee on Publications is comprised of the Publications Committees of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Publications Committees of both Chambers are appointed pursuant to Standing Order at the commencement of each Parliament and have the power to confer and sit jointly. The current membership of the Senate Publications Committee was appointed by resolution of the Senate on 26 February 1985 and the House of Representatives Committee's membership by resolution of the House on 26 March 1985.

The work of the two Committees meeting together as the Joint Committee is largely concerned with the Parliamentary Paper Series. The Committees consider papers and petitions which have been presented to the Parliament and have not been ordered to be printed by either House. The Committees then report to their respective Chambers recommending which papers should be printed and therefore included in the Parliamentary Papers Series. If the report is adopted those papers listed by the Committee are included in the Series. The Joint Committee also has the power to inquire into and report on the printing, publication and distribution of Parliamentary and Government Publications.¹

In the past the Joint Committee has conducted and reported on a number of inquiries with a special emphasis on the Parliamentary Papers Series. In particular the report on inquiry into the scope and distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series (1977 Report) has shaped the development of the Series. The current Joint Committee observes the guidelines laid down in the 1977 Report in administering the Series. It believes the objectives of the Series established in the 1977 Report remain valid today. These objectives are:

- (i) that adequate copies of Parliamentary Papers are available for the use of Senators and Members;
- (ii) that Parliamentary Papers are available for sale to the public;

1. Senate Standing Order No. 36(3).
House of Representatives Standing Order No. 28.

- (iii) that each Parliamentary Paper is available to be bound at the end of the relevant year into a series of volumes and preserved in a convenient and accessible form as a permanent record; and
- (iv) that, in accordance with the Parliamentary Papers Act, persons who publish any paper which has been ordered to be printed are afforded protection against civil or criminal proceedings.

The Joint Committee has also reported on related issues, such as Annual Reports of Commonwealth Departments and Statutory Authorities (7th Special Report) which constitute a large part of the Parliamentary Papers Series. This current inquiry is an extension of the Joint Committee's previous work.

Current Review

At its meeting of 21 May 1985, the Joint Committee resolved to undertake a review of the cost and distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series. The Committee had become alarmed at the increasing costs of the Series and the burgeoning number of papers included in the Series. The Joint Committee was also concerned with the increase in the number of papers that did not readily fall clearly within the publishing guidelines, as set out in the Joint Committee's 1977 Report, but were of such significance as to warrant inclusion in the Series. It was the Joint Committee's view that it was time to reassess previous Joint Committee work in light of these developments together with the need to economise on the production of the Series. In its preliminary work on the inquiry the Joint Committee identified the production of bound volumes of Parliamentary Papers as a high cost component in the production of the Series with a small number of recipients benefitting. The Joint Committee therefore agreed that some attention should be focussed on this issue, together with the content of the Series and its distribution.

The Joint Committee's Inquiry, Submissions and Witnesses

In accordance with the Joint Committee's resolution all recipients of bound volumes were invited to comment on a number of proposals the Joint Committee had put forward as options to the production of annual bound volumes. Recipients were also invited to make any general comments on the Series. Of the 57 domestic recipients invited to comment 46 have provided the Joint Committee with submissions.

The Joint Committee also asked the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives, who undertake work on behalf of the Joint Committee, together with the Australian Government Publishing Service and the Parliamentary Library, to provide submissions. Submissions canvassing a wide range of issues were received from these organizations and evidence was taken at public hearings. Evidence was also given by representatives of the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services and the Committee of Australian University Librarians.

The Joint Committee was mindful of the need to cut costs and also of the need to maintain the principles of the Series as set down in the 1977 Report, especially those relating to its archival and research value. As the inquiry progressed, the Joint Committee also became aware of concerns that any amendments to the Series which would restrict access to important Government information might run counter to current Freedom of Information legislation. In making its recommendations the Joint Committee tried to balance this concern with the need to bring about cost savings in the production and distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series.

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2

THE CONTENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

Current Publishing Guidelines

The Joint Committee on Publications considers the papers and petitions which have been referred to it and recommends to both Houses those papers which should be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series. In making its recommendations, the Joint Committee applies the publication guidelines adopted by the 1977 Report. These principles are:

- (i) that all reports, returns and statements of departments, authorities, Parliamentary and ad hoc committees of inquiry, delegates to conferences, royal commissions, and the like, and documents comprising the Australian Treaty Series, which are presented to Parliament be recommended for printing;
- (ii) that the previous resolution is not intended to include the interim annual reports of departments and authorities;
- (iii) that papers which are regularly presented and subsequently printed as Parliamentary Papers should continue to be recommended for printing on those occasions when they constitute a 'nil' return; and
- (iv) that, wherever possible, the reports of the Auditor-General which are presented in conjunction with annual reports and financial statements of statutory bodies be included in the one printed document with those reports and statements.¹

Since 1977 the number of papers included in the Series has increased and the scope of the papers has varied significantly. In addition to the increasing number of annual reports, due partly to amendments to the Acts Interpretation Act, the number of ad hoc inquiries has expanded. A wide range of organizations and individuals also are being commissioned to conduct these inquiries. This increase has added significantly to the cost of producing the Series.

The Joint Committee believes that a review of the guidelines is required. During the inquiry, it received a number of suggestions which would result in amendments to the guidelines and thus improve the Series. In examining the options put to it, the Joint Committee's prime concern was to maintain consistency in the papers included in the Series. Prior to the 1977 Report establishing the

1. Australia, Parliament, Inquiry into the Purpose, Scope and Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series (J.C. Hodges, Chairman), Parl. Paper 216, Canberra, 1977 p. 6.

first publishing guidelines, inconsistency on a year-to-year basis had been a major criticism. The Joint Committee was, however, also concerned with the cost implications of the proposals.

The Australian Treaty Series

Both the House Departments indicated in submissions that the documents of the Australian Treaty Series should not be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series.² The Australian Treaty Series comprises those documents which record commitments made by Australia and other countries under international law and which require Executive Council approval, for example, treaties, exchange of notes and conventions. The documents are included in Treaty Series in the year in which they came into force for Australia. The Department of Foreign Affairs arranges for the production and distribution of the Treaty Series.

Evidence received indicated that the distribution of the Treaty Series largely duplicates the Parliamentary Papers Series. It was argued that in research on treaties, a specialist source (the Treaty Series) would be used rather than a generalist source (the Parliamentary Papers). The Joint Committee considers these arguments to be valid. The Joint Committee also believes that confusion may arise as publication in the Treaty Series is based on different criteria to publication in the Parliamentary Papers Series (ie tabling). Furthermore, treaties made by Australia, which require legislative action, are included as a schedule to the relevant Act. The Joint Committee therefore, recommends that the documents comprising the Australian Treaty Series should not be recommended for printing.

Reports of Delegations

The Department of the House of Representatives also submitted that the reports of delegates to conferences should not be recommended for printing.³ Such reports include those of delegates to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conferences, the United Nations Sessions as well as the reports of Australian delegations to other countries. It was argued that interest in such reports was short term and it was therefore not appropriate to include these reports in the Parliamentary Papers Series.

The Department of the Senate did not raise any objections to excluding such reports from the printing guidelines. It was indicated that if a significant report of a delegation was tabled it would remain the prerogative of either Chamber to order the report to be printed.⁴ It would therefore be included in the Series. The Joint Committee could also consider the merits of such reports and if it deemed it desirable then it could recommend it for printing.

². Evidence, p. 5 and p. 51.

³. Evidence, p. 51.

⁴. Evidence, p. 47.

The Joint Committee, therefore, recommends that reports of delegates to conferences and international visits should not be recommended for printing.

Reports of Parliamentary Inquiries

The Joint Committee also examined the relevance of the printing guideline which recommends that 'all reports, returns and statements of ... Parliamentary ... Committees ... which are presented to Parliament be recommended for printing ...'.⁵

The Department of the Senate suggested that the Joint Committee clarify this guideline. The Department of the House of Representatives argued that parliamentary committee reports on unfinished inquiries should not be included in the Series, as printing was of questionable value. The submission further suggested that 'the purpose of a printed unfinished inquiry report would be achieved by the Chairman making an oral report in the appropriate House ...'.⁶

In addition to reports of unfinished inquiries the Joint Committee considers a number of other parliamentary committee reports are unsuitable for inclusion in the Parliamentary Papers Series. These include interim or progress reports and also reports on terms of reference that do not report on the committee's findings but merely indicate the work to date on an inquiry. The Joint Committee suggests that these reports could also be made in a statement by the Chairman of the Committee to the appropriate House.

The Joint Committee, therefore, recommends that all parliamentary committee reports other than final reports on an inquiry or final reports on aspects of the inquiry, should not be recommended for printing.

Reports of Ad Hoc Committees of Inquiry

A further suggestion of both the Department of the Senate and the House of Representatives related to the printing of the reports of ad hoc committees of inquiry.⁷ The Department of the Senate suggested that the guidelines should be clarified so that all such reports not be automatically recommended for printing, but rather considered on their merits. The Department of the House of Representatives argued that there was a proliferation of these reports in recent years and inclusion in the Series should not be mandatory.

The Joint Committee is aware that the number of these reports commissioned in a range of ministerial portfolios has increased in recent years. It has used some flexibility in recommending which

⁵. Hodges Report, p. 6.

⁶. Evidence, p. 52.

⁷. Evidence, p. 6 and p. 51.

reports of ad hoc committees be printed. However, the Joint Committee believes that it has a responsibility to maintain the principal documents presented to the Parliament in the Series. The Joint Committee found this a difficult area in which to clarify the printing guidelines.

The Joint Committee considered a number of options as the basis for a printing guideline. It rejected using the nature of the inquiry. It could not establish that the significance of a report resulting from one type of inquiry (for example, a task force inquiry) was greater than that of another (for example, a consultant's inquiry), and should be included in the Series while the other excluded. It found that the nature of the inquiry was not a determining factor in the importance of an inquiry. Reports made by a variety of inquiring organizations, including some departmental reviews, were judged by the Joint Committee to have a major impact on the work of the Parliament and should therefore be included in the Series.

The Joint Committee also considered the subject of an inquiry as the basis for recommending that a report be printed. While the Joint Committee concluded that the subject was important it found the generalizations could not be made so that a principle could be established. The Joint Committee found that this problem also applied in attempting to use the origins of an inquiry as the basis for recommending printing. It did consider only including in the Series those reports that had arisen from the Parliament, but this was, too narrow a principle to encompass all the reports that the Committee felt it was desirable to include in the Series.

After examining the issue of printing guidelines for the ad hoc committees of inquiry, the Joint Committee recommends that reports of such inquiries should continue to be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series except when the historical or political interest is limited to the short term.

Revised Publishing Guidelines

The Joint Committee, in evidence, sought the views of the users of the Parliamentary Papers on the usefulness of the other documents regularly included in the Series, such as the annual reports of departments and statutory authorities and the reports of Royal Commissions.⁸ The responses indicated that these documents should remain in the Series.

Accordingly, the Joint Committee recommends the publishing guidelines be revised to read:

- (i) that all reports, returns and statements of departments, authorities, Parliamentary and ad hoc inquiries, royal Commissions which are presented to Parliament be recommended for printing;

⁸. Evidence, p. 177 and p. 229.

- (ii) that the previous resolution is not intended to include interim annual reports of departments and authorities nor reports of unfinished Parliamentary inquiries and reports of ad hoc inquiries with short term interest;
- (iii) that papers which are regularly presented and subsequently printed as Parliamentary Papers should continue to be recommended for printing on those occasions when they constitute a 'nil' return; and
- (iv) that, wherever possible, the reports of the Auditor-General which are presented in conjunction with annual reports and financial statements of statutory bodies be included in the one printed document with those reports and statements.

The Joint Committee believes that some cost savings will result from these amendments.

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 3

PAMPHLET COPIES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

Production

The Parliamentary Papers Series is currently produced in two formats. Within a short period of tabling, the papers are available in the 'pamphlet' version which is a B5 sized document bound in a blue cover clearly identifying it as a Parliamentary Paper. The Parliamentary Papers are also bound annually (discussed in Chapter 4).

The cost of producing the Series is shared between the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives. In the past, considerable cost savings have been achieved by simultaneously producing the departmental tabling version and the stock for the Parliamentary Paper version. Using this method the Parliamentary Departments are able to acquire the Parliamentary Paper stock at run-on cost, which restricts costs to those associated with paper, ink and presswork. In ordering run-ons Parliamentary Officers and AGPS staff use the publishing guidelines (discussed in Chapter 2) and precedents to predict which paper would normally be included in the Series. Table 3.1 indicates the costs associated with the production of the papers for the Series.

TABLE 3.1

Costs Related to Publishing Parliamentary Papers¹

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Senate Cost*</u>	<u>House of Representatives Cost</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>No. of Papers Printed (Calendar year)</u>
	\$	\$	\$	
1977-78	342,536	219,617	562,153	354 (1977)
1978-79	301,085	239,336	540,421	438 (1978)
1979-80	379,850	248,803	628,653	419 (1979)
1980-81	206,002	225,394	431,396	402 (1980)
1981-82	376,418	205,654	582,072	364 (1981)
1982-83	363,322	346,510	709,832	455 (1982)
1983-84	223,946	226,995	450,941	407 (1983)
1984-85	292,006	270,054	562,060	326 (1984)

* in some years the costings include the setting-up costs of some Committee reports.

Note: The number of papers printed vary each year. As figures on a financial year basis are not available for the papers printed, there is some distortion in the costings.

1. Evidence, p.15, p. 61 and p.64

Cost increases result from increases in production cost, the increased length of the reports, and the increasing number of papers in the Series. The Joint Committee was also informed, however, that increasingly author bodies are departing from the production standards laid down in the relevant AGPS circulars, and more recently in the Commonwealth Printing and Publishing Manual. The responsible Parliamentary department pays in run-on costs for these prestige publications which incur additional expenses in, for example, the high quality paper required and the additional press work.

The Joint Committee received a number of suggestions aimed at reducing the cost of run-on production. These suggestions largely related to the production of the annual reports of statutory authorities and departments but it also received suggestions as to the content of these reports.

(i) Production Standards

The AGPS administer the production standards for documents that are to be tabled in Parliament. The production standards relate to the appearance and quality of publications and aim at cost control by curbing extravagant design and production. The standards also permit the efficient production of publications within restricted time schedules. They relate to design, artwork and other aspects of copy presentation, as well as printing and binding.

There is currently a three class system applied to documents to be presented to Parliament. The standards governing Class I documents ensure production of documents which are simply designed to convey facts and information. These standards are applied to many committee reports, budget papers, electoral returns and statements to the Parliament on the administration of various Acts and annual and other departmental reports. Class II production allows design and production to be a little more costly and is applied to those Class I documents that are considered to have a wider public interest. Class III documents are regarded as prestige documents and are produced by government agencies competing in the commercial sector.

In evidence, AGPS stressed to the Joint Committee that they are encountering:

...increasing difficulty in getting agencies to conform to the current three-class system of standards. Most agencies relate their annual reports to the commercial type annual report which in the main is a public relations document. We are continually advising agencies that reports which are to be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series are reports to Parliament and must be contained to the standards laid down by parliament. A recent introduction of the award scheme sponsored by the Royal Australian Institute of Public Administration tends to encourage agencies to upgrade the physical appearance of their reports as well as layout and content. This is increasing the pressure for upgraded standards. Should standards be upgraded, and either two or four colour printings be approved, AGPS

would find it very difficult to meet the tight deadlines required by the agencies. Colour work requires a longer lead time, more designing, proofing and printing processes and it is obviously more expensive...².

These complaints were echoed by the Parliamentary Departments responsible for the administration of the Series and supported by the Joint Committee's own experience.

One of the recommendations made by AGPS to counter this problem was to revise the three class system to two, by eliminating the current Class II. The majority of annual reports to be tabled in the Parliament would be produced in accordance with the current Class I standards. The use of half-tones or the typesetting of reports would not be precluded by the use of Class I production standards. The current Class III standard would be used only in the production of annual reports from authorities (fewer than a dozen)³ that meet the criteria set down. AGPS indicated that cost savings would be difficult to quantify, but estimate that it would be in the region of \$10,000 to \$20,000⁴ per annum.

(ii) Two Edition Annual Reports

The Department of the Senate in its submission also observed that the production standards were being flaunted and indicated that a substantial reduction in costs for run-ons could be made if the size and content of reports was standardized. In discussing the problems associated with current production standards the Department recognised that '...some organisations contract work to private printers directly and therefore AGPS does not have the opportunity to apply the standards...'⁵. It suggested that to arrest these increasing costs, consideration be given to preparing two editions of each annual report.

The suggestion was broadly aimed at dividing the 'public relations' content of an annual report, and that which is obligatory under statute, into separate volumes. While both editions could be presented to the Parliament, only that edition containing the information required by Statute should be included in the Parliamentary Paper Series. The Senate Department indicated that the edition meeting the statutory requirements would contain the financial statements, together with the Auditor-General's report and a concise summary of the organisation's activities as outlined in the relevant Joint Committee on Publications recommendation in the Report Annual Reports of Commonwealth Departments and Statutory Authorities. The Department of the Senate stressed that production standards should be controlled to ensure that the publications were simple in both design and production. It further suggested that

2. Evidence, p.116

3. Evidence, p.118.

4. AGPS, Additional Information, dated 16 October 1986, p.3.

5. Evidence, p.13.

'...all organisations required by statute to table a periodic or annual report in Parliament ... would be subject to this provision...'.⁶.

(iii) An Annual Reports Act

The Department of the House of Representatives also identified the problem of '...expensive public relations documents going well beyond the stated principles which apply to papers presented to Parliament...'.⁷ It also indicated that cost savings could be secured if the production standards could be enforced more strictly and if the contents of annual reports could be restricted.

This Department also listed the earlier work of this Joint Committee on the contents of annual reports. It further suggested that the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Government Operations' proposal to introduce an Annual Reports Act be examined. The Department argued that an Annual Reports Act '...would be used to control both the content of Annual Reports and the printing standards of all reports presented to Parliament...'.⁸

Conclusions and Recommendations on Production Standards and Report Content

The Joint Committee believes that the three proposals by AGPS, and the Departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives represent approaches to different aspects of the same problem.

The Joint Committee recognises that the increasing cost of run-ons due to the unrestricted production standards employed and the increasing content of the annual reports of departments and statutory authorities significantly contributes to the cost of the Parliamentary Papers Series. Whilst wishing to reduce these costs, the Joint Committee does not wish to restrict publically funded bodies in reporting on their activities fully to the Parliament. The Joint Committee's objective is to make this reporting procedure more cost efficient.

The Joint Committee is also increasingly concerned about the expensive 'consumer oriented' production of annual reports by departments and statutory authorities published to inform the Parliament and the public of their activities. The Joint Committee's concern is that the increasing costs associated with these publications are funded by the Australian public.

The Joint Committee agrees with the AGPS that the recommendation to eliminate Class II from the production standards would reduce the temptation to print outside the guidelines. However, it is also concerned that AGPS will continue to have difficulties in enforcing

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6. Evidence, p.14.
 7. Evidence, p.55.
 8. Evidence, p.55.

the production standards. The Joint Committee notes that the Governmental response in 1982 to the 7th Special Report clearly indicated:-

...(7) As reports are to provide information on the operation of departments rather than to promote them, modest standards of production are desirable and appropriate.⁹ Relevant AGPS Guidelines should be closely observed... (Senate Hansard 11.11.82 page 2262).

Evidence indicates that this guideline has not been applied by departments despite Governmental endorsement. The Joint Committee is concerned that without another incentive, only a punitive measure will encourage departments and statutory authorities to abide by the production standards. The Joint Committee believes that as organisations are concerned with presentation, loosening the restrictions relating to cover design of reports may represent an incentive to print within the standards of Class I. The Joint Committee believes that in increasing the cover standards for Class I so that two colours may be used, there would be no requirement for Class II production. The cost savings would not be those estimated by AGPS as the production of the cover would incur additional expenses.

Consequently the Joint Committee recommends that the standards relating to the production of the cover of Class I reports be upgraded so that two colour designs may be included and that Class II be dropped from the production standards. The Joint Committee further recommends that the current Class III standards be applied only to reports of those government agencies competing in the commercial sector.

The Joint Committee will continue to monitor the annual reports tabled in the Parliament and will seek the co-operation of Ministers to ensure that departments and statutory authorities falling within their portfolios adhere to the production guidelines. The Joint Committee considers that such co-operation is critical if cost reductions are to be made and if microforming the Series is to be an option (discussed in Chapter 4). AGPS has the responsibility to prepare and promulgate the production standards and to see that author bodies adhere to these standards. The Joint Committee supports AGPS in this important role.

In tandem with this recommendation and as a means of reducing the content of annual reports, the Joint Committee gave serious consideration to the Department of the Senate's proposal to produce annual reports in two editions.

The Joint Committee envisages that a two edition reporting system would allow for both documents to be presented to the Parliament. The system would not be mandatory but would be available to those organisations who wish to extend their report beyond the guidelines and production standards. Under this system one edition would be an extensive review of the organisation's activities and any other promotional or topical material. This edition should be publically available and its title would clearly indicate the issues discussed

9. Australia, Senate Debates, 1982 Vol. S 96, p.2262.

within the report, for example, 'Review of Activities 1986'. This edition would not be included in the Series. The other edition only would be incorporated in the Parliamentary Papers Series. It would remain entitled 'Annual Report 1986' and would be printed as a Class I document. This edition would include the financial statements and the Auditor-General's report and other material required in the guidelines.

The Joint Committee, however, believes that the guidelines recommended in its 7th Special Report¹⁰ require updating. It notes that the Governmental response to this Report included guidelines for the preparation of annual reports for both departments and statutory authorities. The guidelines for the statutory authorities are also included in the policy discussion paper released by the Government last June, entitled Statutory Authorities and Government Business Enterprises.¹¹ The Joint Committee believes that revised guidelines should reflect current trends such as references to program budgeting in the financial statements and the need to access 'Freedom of Information' material as well as the new production standards recommended above. It recommends that the guidelines which are to be presented to Parliament pursuant to section 27(7) of the Public Service Act 1922 include these references and that the guidelines relating to reporting standards of statutory authorities also incorporate them.

Although it is difficult to quantify, the Joint Committee believes the two edition annual report proposal offers a number of cost saving advantages. It is clear that substantial savings in run-on costs could be made by limiting production to Class I standards and restricting the contents of the edition of annual reports to be included in the Series. Further, the cost reductions would be achieved without restricting organisations from providing extensive information on their activities in the edition, 'Review of Activities'. In addition, the Joint Committee considers that this system would provide an incentive to organisations that have a statutory obligation to report to the Parliament, but are not required to use the services of AGPS, to abide by Class I production standards in producing the annual report edition. The Joint Committee, therefore, recommends that a system of two edition annual reports be available to those organisations wishing to publish an annual promotional document. Further, the Joint Committee recommends that the edition which includes the financial statements and Auditor-General's report, and meets the other guidelines under the Public Service Act 1922 or those for statutory authorities only be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series.

In making this recommendation the Joint Committee has not abandoned the idea proposed by the Department of the House of Representatives to introduce an Annual Report Act. An Annual Report Act could incorporate the recommendations relating to production standards and two edition annual reports.

10. Australia, Parliament, Annual Reports of Commonwealth Departments and Statutory Authorities (R. Gillard, Chairman), Parl. Paper 211, Canberra 1979 pp.1f.
11. Statutory Authorities and Government Business Enterprises: Proposed Policy Guidelines, A Policy Discussion Paper, June 1986, AGPS, Canberra 1986.

The origins of this proposal are in the work of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Government Operations. In its 5th Report the Senate Committee discussed at some length the idea of an Annual Report Act. It proposed a range of issues which it believed should be addressed by such legislation. These issues related both to departments and statutory authorities and included:

- . the format and information included in financial statements
- . nominated a standard deadline by which such reports should be presented to the Parliament
- . releasing reports out of Parliamentary sitting periods
- . the provision of an interim annual report explaining why delays are occurring in the provision of an annual report
- . sanctions for organisations which fail to comply with these legislative requirements¹².

The Joint Committee notes that the Governmental response to this and related reports indicated that it was not convinced of the need to introduce an Annual Reports Act. The response and subsequent governmental actions did incorporate in existing legislation some of the points made by the Senate Committee.

The Joint Committee believes that this approach has not been particularly successful. As the Joint Committee has already indicated, the inclusion in the guidelines, presented in November 1982, of the principle relating to the observation of AGPS production standards has not been implemented by departments and statutory authorities. The amendment to section 34C of the Acts Interpretation Act, which the Governmental response indicated would replace the concept of an interim annual report, has not been adhered to either. An Annual Reports Act would link the variations in legislative and other arrangements that currently exist relating to annual reporting requirements without over-riding the particular reporting provisions of the other legislation. It notes that the State of Victoria already has an Act (the Annual Reporting Act 1983) which places legislative requirements on the reporting of State authorities. The Joint Committee, therefore, recommends the Government consider the introduction of an Annual Reports Act as a means of ensuring that federally funded bodies report on their responsibilities to the Parliament and do so within the appropriate production standards.

Camera-Ready Production

The Joint Committee also examined a number of other options to reduce costs.

12. Australia, Parliament, Statutory Authorities of the Commonwealth, Fifth Report (P.E. Rae, Chairman, Parl. Paper 197, Canberra, 1982 pp 119ff.

One such option, canvassed by the Department of the Senate, was that the Joint Committee's 1977 Report's recommendation in relation to camera-ready printing be received. The recommendation reads:

That where time permits, all reports which are due to be tabled in Parliament and which fall within the Parliamentary Paper publishing guidelines laid down by this Committee should be typeset with sufficient copies being produced simultaneously to satisfy Parliamentary Paper distribution.

That where it is necessary for a report to be produced with the utmost urgency, and as a result, the necessary time required to typeset the document is unavailable and, if such report readily falls within the Parliamentary Paper publishing guidelines laid down by this Committee, then it is most desirable that such report be produced in accordance with the requirements of the relevant AGPS circular¹³ dealing with reproduction from camera-ready copy.

The Senate Department argued that the difference in the quality of a typeset report over a 'camera-ready' produced report is marginal. Further 'camera-ready' reports are currently included in the Parliamentary Papers Series as Senate Committee reports are frequently produced by this method. The Joint Committee notes that House of Representatives and Joint Committee reports are also printed by this method. The Senate Department suggested that all author authorities should be given the same opportunity as the Parliamentary departments to decide (either on the basis of costs, time or any other factor) whether a report should be produced 'camera-ready' or typeset. It was indicated that cost reductions could result.

The Joint Committee agrees with the proposal and therefore recommends that 'camera-ready' production of reports which readily fall within the Parliamentary Papers publishing guidelines (Chapter 2) should be produced in accordance with the AGPS requirements.

Other Forms Of Production Including Microfiche

During the inquiry the Joint Committee was also prompted to examine other forms of production. The Industries Assistance Commission suggested that '...it would seem undesirable that restrictions drawn up for an earlier state of technology should slow down their [advance technology methods for dissemination of information] adoption...'.¹⁴

The Industries Assistance Commission's comments were made in the light of its experience in producing reports resulting from its inquiries. It indicated that production costs for one report were

13. Hodges Report, p.26.

14. Industries Assistance Commission, Submission, dated 14 July 1986, p.1.

increased by \$15,400 due to the need to produce hard copy of two volumes it considered did '...not need to be read in conjunction with the body of the report...' ¹⁵. It produced copies for its own use in microfiche and argued that with the increasing availability of microfiche readers access would not have been restricted.

The Joint Committee believes that the problems relating to the use of technology in the production of reports for tabling will increase as future advances result in greater competition from the alternative means of production, such as computer readable information on floppy disks and audio or video cassette recordings. The Joint Committee is aware that author authorities will seek to use the most cost efficient means of production. It also considers, however, that it has a responsibility to ensure the widest possible public access to documents tabled in the Parliament. It therefore cannot endorse the wide-scale use of alternatives to hard copy. The Joint Committee concedes that material that does not need to be read with the body of a report can be produced in forms other than hard copy if costs will be reduced by employing this production method. The Joint Committee recommends that alternative technology may be used in the production of material that is not required to be read with the body of a report provided the Joint Committee is consulted prior to production.

Blue Covers For Pamphlet Copies

The Department of the House of Representatives also suggested that costs could be reduced by removing the blue covers that are wrapped around each Parliamentary Paper. They argued that the cost of this exercise, between \$360 and \$500 for each report, cost the Parliament a minimum of \$117,360 in 1984. ¹⁶ The necessary information could be conveyed by over printing the front covers of the tabled version. Alternatively, adhesive labels bearing the information could be fixed to the existing covers.

The Joint Committee canvassed this option amongst users of the Parliamentary Papers Series. While no problems were foreseen by the users, the Joint Committee was not convinced that substituting another method for the current blue cover to convey the Parliamentary Paper information would be cost efficient. Further, the Joint Committee understands that some Parliamentary Committee reports are printed only as Parliamentary Papers and problems may arise in these cases if either of the alternative methods are adopted. Consequently, the Joint Committee, at this stage, will not recommend that the identifying blue covers be removed from the Papers in the Series. However, it is a cost saving option that the Joint Committee will keep under review.

15. ibid

16. Evidence, p.55.

Distribution of Pamphlet Copies

The Joint Committee also examined the guidelines used in the distribution of the pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers Series. The current guidelines are:

...that libraries of States, State Parliament, municipalities, universities, colleges of advanced education, teachers colleges and other post-secondary institutions, secondary schools and Commonwealth departments (or in absence, the Secretary); and foreign embassies, newspapers, members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, political parties which contest Federal elections and which have a recognised National Secretariat, and appropriate addresses as determined by the Presiding Officers which are consistent with the terms of this recommendation, be entitled to be supplied with one free copy of each of the undermentioned publications, upon request:

Parliamentary Papers, Standing Orders of both Houses and the Short Description of Business and Procedures of the House of Representatives

That trade, business, employer, employee, professional, commercial and similar organisations be not entitled to receive free distribution of the above....¹⁷.

Both the Departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives argued that the removal of two categories from the free distribution of the pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers would result in cost savings without disadvantaging recipients.

Secondary Schools

It was suggested by both Chamber Departments that secondary schools be withdrawn from the free distribution list.¹⁸ It was argued that as no secondary school had availed themselves of the free distribution, the exclusion would not disadvantage any current recipient. While no cost savings would be achieved it would ensure that no additional costs would be incurred in the future.

Accordingly the Joint Committee recommends that secondary schools no longer be eligible for the distribution of pamphlet copies of Parliamentary Papers.

Parliamentary Press Gallery and Newspapers

The second category of recipients that the Chamber Departments suggested should be removed from the free list guidelines was the Parliamentary Press Gallery and newspapers.¹⁹ It was argued that

17. Hodges Report, p.7.
18. Evidence, p.6 and p.52.
19. Evidence, pp.6f and p.53.

the members of the Press Gallery received copies of all reports upon tabling and that this was when the news value of the reports was the greatest and press coverage was most important. To provide Parliamentary Paper copies of a report to this group was duplication and therefore unnecessary. It was further argued that as newspapers had members in the Press Gallery receiving each report on tabling it was also duplication to provide newspapers with pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers. Furthermore, the Parliamentary Papers are available in State Libraries and the Parliamentary Library should the press wish to do research using the documents. The Department of the House of Representatives also suggested that newspapers could more properly be regarded as commercial enterprises and therefore not entitled to free issues.

There are currently 14 newspapers and 5 agencies in the Parliamentary Press Gallery receiving pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers Series. Working on AGPS estimates that a reduction of 10 copies per Parliamentary paper would result in an approximate saving of \$5,000 per annum (based on the work-load experienced in 1984),²⁰ the Joint Committee estimates that a minimum of \$9,500 per annum could be saved by excluding these groups from the guidelines.

The Joint Committee believes that a significant saving is to be made by reducing this duplication and therefore recommends that the members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and newspapers be excluded from the free distribution guidelines.

Overseas Recipients

The Department of the House of Representatives suggested that some alterations be made to the administrative arrangements existing for admitting new overseas organisations to the free distribution list.

Under current arrangements, set down in the Joint Committee's 1977 Report, the Presiding Officers must determine which overseas addresses should be provided with pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers free of charge. There are no guidelines to assist the Clerks in advising the Presiding Officers when taking such a decision. It was argued that such decision-making would be facilitated by guidelines.

The Department of the House of Representatives proposed that the basis of entrance to the free list for overseas organisations should be:

... the main national or parliamentary library of the country, and then only if there is an exchange arrangement to our mutual benefit between that country and the National Library of Australia...²¹.

The Joint Committee determined that these guidelines were an appropriate basis for admitting new overseas recipients. Further, it believes that, as with admittance under other guidelines, the

20. Evidence, p105.

21. Evidence, pp.75f.

Presiding Officers should not be troubled on such matters of routine. The Presiding Officers remain, of course, the arbitrator in cases that do not clearly meet the guidelines.

The Joint Committee, therefore, recommends that overseas addresses that are the main national or parliamentary library of a country be admitted on request to the free distribution list, if an exchange arrangement exists with the National Library of Australia. It does not intend this guideline should exclude any organisation currently receiving pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers Series.

'For Sale' copies for AGPS Bookshops

Another proposal made by the Departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives was to reduce the number of copies of Parliamentary Papers that were made available for sale through AGPS.^{22.}

The current production of Parliamentary Papers allows for 100 pamphlet copies to be made available for sale in AGPS bookshops in State capitals throughout Australia and by mail sales. Both House departments indicated that in their experience this supply was significantly greater than the demand. The situation was thought to arise from the duplication by the Parliamentary Paper of the initial tabled report which was more attractive to the customer and was available prior to the Parliamentary Paper version.^{23.} Indeed, AGPS also suggested that '... this quantity is in excess of requirements...'^{24.}

The Department of the Senate argued that a reduction by at least 50 copies would be a closer approximate to demand. AGPS suggested that a:

...tiered scale for quantities could be introduced and the quantities ordered would be based on the AGPS assessment on the saleability of the particular parliamentary paper within the scale. The minimum of the scale is considered to be 25 and the maximum to be 100...^{25.}

Alternatively, it suggested that the quantity be limited to the 14 standing order subscribers and therefore the pamphlet version would not be available for sale in the bookshops.

The Joint Committee does not wish to discontinue the practice of making Parliamentary Papers available for sale in the bookshops as the Series would then cease to fulfil one of its purposes; ie '...that Parliamentary Papers are available for sale to the public...'.^{26.} Nor does it want to prevent the 14 standing order

22. Evidence, p.10, p.25 and p.54.

23. Evidence, p.10 and p.54.

24. Evidence, p.114.

25. Evidence, p.115.

26. Hodges Report, p.4.

subscribers from receiving copies. It does, however, believe that a substantial reduction in the number of copies made available through AGPS is warranted.

The Joint Committee rejects AGPS' initial proposal of a tiered system as it considers it to be impractical administratively. It notes the minimum required by AGPS is 25 copies and believes that this is sufficient to meet standing orders and bookshop sales. The Joint Committee acknowledges that AGPS could sell more than 25 copies of 'best sellers' but believes that AGPS can alter the amount ordered from the initial print run accordingly. The Joint Committee, therefore, recommends that the stock of pamphlet Parliamentary Papers made available to AGPS be reduced from 100 to 25 or sufficient to meet subscribers' standing orders.

Political Parties

Since the Joint Committee's 1977 Report establishing the distribution guidelines, the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 has been amended (in 1983) to provide for the registration of political parties. The Joint Committee believes that the existing guidelines relating to political parties is not only outdated but could be subject to interpretation. The Joint Committee, therefore, recommends that free distribution to Federal Political Parties should be on the basis that the party has been registered by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Revised Guidelines For Distribution

In line with the above recommendations the Joint Committee recommends that the distribution guidelines be revised as follows:

that libraries of States, State parliaments, municipalities, tertiary education institutions, and Commonwealth departments (or in absence, the Secretary); and foreign embassies, political parties which are registered under the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, the main national or parliamentary library of a country which has an exchange arrangement with the National Library of Australia, and appropriate addresses as determined by the Presiding Officers which are consistent with the terms of this recommendation, be entitled to be supplied with one free copy of each of the undermentioned publications, upon request:

Parliamentary Papers, Standing Orders of both Houses and the Short Description of Business and Procedures of the House of Representatives

That trade, business, employer, employee, professional, commercial and similar organisations including members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and newspapers, be not entitled to receive free distribution of the above.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4

BOUND VOLUMES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

SERIES - PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

1. Production

Since the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Committee's 1977 Report, 110 sets of the bound volumes of the Parliamentary Paper Series are prepared annually. Recipients receive a total of 81 sets with the remainder kept in storage to meet any future demand. The cost to the Parliament of binding sets over the past seven years is indicated in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1 BOUND VOLUMES - COSTS FROM 1975¹.

<u>SERIES YEAR</u>	<u>YEAR BOUND</u>	<u>NO. OF VOLUMES</u>	<u>NO. SETS BOUND</u>	<u>COSTS</u>
1975	(1979)	17	142	\$41,968
1976	(1979/80)	24	142	\$64,468
1977	(1981)	16	144	\$67,984
1978	(1983/84)	23	110	\$71,206
1979	(1984/85)	21	110	\$68,532
1980	(1984/85)	23	110	\$62,074
1981	(1985-86)	26	110	\$70,300

This cost relates solely to the binding of papers and associated material and does not include run-ons of costs.

This cost relates solely to the binding of papers and associated material and does not include costs associated with run-ons (estimates to be \$1.40 per paper) nor those associated with the blue Parliamentary Paper cover (\$0.85 per paper). Binding for one volume is estimated to cost \$25.00 per bound volume.² On the basis of these estimates the total cost for each set of bound parliamentary papers for 1981, for example, is \$1,469. The 110 sets of bound volumes for that year, therefore, cost in the order of \$161,590.

Cost savings in the production of run-ons (discussed in Chapter 3) will affect the costs of the bound volumes. A reduction in the size of the reports, for example, providing that there is no major increase in the number of papers included in the Parliamentary Papers Series, will reduce the number of volumes in each set and therefore the cost. Even with these cost savings, however, the binding costs remain a significant component of the Parliamentary Papers Series. The Joint Committee, therefore examined possible cost savings that can be made specifically in this area.

¹. Evidence, p. 62.

². The Department of the House of Representatives, Additional Information, dated 22 September 1986.

The Joint Committee developed a number of options to reduce the costs of the bound volumes without undermining the principles of the Series. The Joint Committee was aware that the major function of the bound volumes was to meet historical and research demands. The pamphlet copies of Parliamentary Papers meet the immediate demand for papers tabled in the Parliament whilst the bound volumes preserve these papers as a permanent record.³ The Joint Committee considered four options and sought comments from bound volume recipients. The options were:

- (i) free issue of additional copies of papers included in Series together with relevant indexes, to enable recipients to undertake a 'self-binding' program,
- (ii) continued provision of bound volumes by subscription in order to recover the cost of production and binding,
- (iii) the cessation of production and distribution of annual bound volumes of the series, and
- (iv) issue of microform version of bound volumes.

AACOBS, in evidence, indicated that they had conducted a survey of member institutions to assess reaction to the options circulated by the Joint Committee. The results of their survey have also been considered by the Joint Committee.

'Self-binding'

The Joint Committee considered the option of providing organizations with additional copies of the pamphlet Parliamentary Papers and the preliminary material so that organizations could bind their own volumes of the Parliamentary Papers. This option would offer a number of advantages to bound volume recipients. The cost savings, however, would not be as great as those affected under the other options as there would not be the cost reductions in the production of run-ons.

The advantages of this option would be the provision of additional copies of the Parliamentary Papers to replace those copies which, through extensive use, had become 'dog-eared'. The additional copies would ensure that the Papers were not withdrawn from circulation while binding was being undertaken. This option would also provide the recipients flexibility in binding their volumes. Different organizations for example, may opt to bind the volumes by subject rather than the numerical order of the Papers. AACOBS indicated that this factor was, in fact, considered by their member organisations as an argument for self-binding.⁴

There was a marked unwillingness amongst recipients to accept this option. Responses from those recipients with bindery sections argued

³. Hodges Report, p. 22.

⁴. Evidence, p. 209.

that existing work programs were such that the additional burden of binding the Parliamentary Papers Series would only further delay other work. Other organizations submitted that this option was only available to large organizations that currently had bindery sections. Only two of AACOBS 31 respondents expressed a preference for this option.⁵

Of the minority accepting this option, they believed that the bound volumes would be available sooner if the binding was done by them. The Joint Committee was concerned by this attitude, although it recognizes that in the past there has been some basis for it. The Joint Committee believes that since the implementation of the recommendations of its 1977 Report, the time taken to produce the bound volumes is decreasing. The recommendations relating to the printing of papers in the Series have effectively reduced the movement of proofs and therefore the resultant delays. In the future, given the availability of finance, it is expected that the production of bound volumes each year will be for the preceding year.

Subscription

The Joint Committee supports the principle that those who benefit from the bound volumes should be prepared to pay a subscription fee on a cost recovery basis. However, the application of this principle could reduce demand for the bound volumes. It was particularly concerned, therefore, to assess potential reaction to this application of the user pay principle.

The majority of respondents were not in favour of this proposal. They argued that the concept would not reduce costs but would simply transfer the costs currently borne by the Parliament to the recipients, the majority of whom are publicly funded organizations. The evidence provided by AACOBS supports this assessment.

The Joint Committee notes that the current costs of binding an average set of bound volumes is approximately \$680 per annum.⁶ This figure, provided in evidence by the Department of the House of Representatives, does not include 'the variable costs of the component issues that go to make up the volumes'.⁷ This component should be included in any cost recovery subscription rate. The Department of the House of Representatives estimates that on a cost recovery basis a set of bound volumes for 1985 would cost \$2,000, while retail cost would be \$12,000.⁸ The Joint Committee is also aware that producing the bound volumes series in microform would significantly diminish the costs.

5. *ibid*

6. Evidence, p. 82.

7. Evidence, p. 82.

8. The Department of the House of Representatives, Additional Information, dated 22 September 1986.

Cessation of Bound Volumes

This is the most cost efficient of the proposals. In ceasing to bind the Parliamentary Papers annually the Parliament could make savings in the order of \$130,000 per annum. Cost savings from binding alone are in the order of \$74,800.⁹ Further cost savings would be made in the area of run-on costs. AGPS indicated in their submission that a reduction in run-ons by 100, would reduce run-on costs by \$50,000 per annum.¹⁰ Abolishing bound volumes would reduce run-ons by 110. This option, however, will undermine one of the purposes of the Series as outlined in the Joint Committee's 1977 Report, namely:

- (i) that each Parliamentary Paper is available to be bound at the end of the year into a series of volumes and preserved in a convenient and accessible form as a permanent record...¹¹

Nonetheless the Joint Committee considered that this option should be canvassed.

The recipients of bound volumes were almost unanimous in their reluctance to accept this proposal. An almost universal complaint was that without the 'official' set, holdings of Parliamentary Papers would become disjointed and may be incomplete. AACOBS research also highlighted this as a concern.¹² Some submissions indicated that this currently occurs because pamphlet copies are easily misfiled and, indeed in some instances, lost. The Joint Committee believes that these organizations have a responsibility to secure their holdings. Other organizations, in making this point, suggested that the current deposit system, operated by AGPS, contributed to this problem. Parliamentary Papers are not produced in sequential order and AGPS supply deposit libraries on production. It is, therefore, difficult to establish which pamphlet copies are missing and which have not as yet been issued. The Joint Committee appreciates the problems that this would create and therefore recommends that AGPS, when supplying the pamphlet copies of Parliamentary Papers, provide a cumulative listing of all Papers issued in that year and a list of outstanding papers from the previous year.

A number of submissions arguing against the abolition of the bound volumes suggested that this action would be in contradiction of the spirit of the 'Freedom of Information' legislation. Such suggestions were of concern to the Joint Committee as it had no intention of restricting public access to papers tabled in the Australian Parliament. The pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers do ensure that these papers are available to the public. Other avenues, such as copies made available for sale through the AGPS and copies issued by the author authority also provide access by the public.

9. This figure uses \$680 as the average cost of binding a set of Papers.

10. Evidence, p.105.

11. Hodges Report, p. 20.

12. Evidence, p. 208.

Several submissions expressed an understanding of the task confronting the Joint Committee was undertaking. The submission from the Librarian of the Parliament of Victoria suggested reducing costs without ceasing the production of bound volumes by producing them in a simplified format. The Joint Committee welcomed this suggestion and investigated the possibility with AGPS. It has already secured some cost savings in this area by implementing the recommendations of its 1977 Report to bind the Series in buckram rather than half leather finish. AGPS informed the Joint Committee that '... The method by which we are doing it [ie buckram] is about as economical as you could get ...'.¹³ It is therefore considered unfeasible to pursue cost savings in this area any further.

Finally, the Joint Committee would point out that while the bound volume recipients were reluctant to agree to the cessation of bound volumes, not all recipients responded within a twelve month period to the Joint Committee's invitation to comment. The Joint Committee is concerned not to misinterpret the views of those organisations that did not respond. It, however, did consider that these organizations may not be concerned to maintain the bound volumes in their present form.

Bound Volumes in Microform

The Joint Committee in its 1977 Report made the following recommendation:

That when production and financial considerations permit, the Parliamentary Paper Series be reproduced in a microform version.¹⁴

It was on the basis of this recommendation that the Joint Committee considered microforming the bound volumes as a replacement for hard copy. The proposal offers a number of advantages both to the Parliament, in terms of production costs and production times and to recipients as a means of saving a substantial amount of space. It is apparent from the submissions that saving space is the most attractive aspect of bound volumes in microform. A further advantage appears to be the relative ease with which replacements can be produced.

The majority of bound volume recipients discussed this proposal, with six recipients indicating that microform was not acceptable and 3 suggesting that it would be best as a back-up to hard copy. There was some ambivalence in the responses received but, where preferences were indicated, an overwhelming majority favoured microfiche over microfilm. The results of the AACOBS survey also reflected that microfiche was the preferred format. The survey, however, revealed that only 8 respondents of the 31¹⁵ felt that microform would be more suitable than bound volumes...¹⁵

¹³. Evidence, p. 125.

¹⁴. Hodges Report, p. 31.

¹⁵. Evidence, p. 208.

Recipients expressed concern about the potential reduction in the standard of reproduction if the bound volumes were transferred to microfiche. A related concern was that the standard of production may vary over time. The Joint Committee believes, however, that these potential problems could be over-come by adopting the standards established by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Microfiche. The Inter-Departmental Committee was set up following the increase in demand for sets of Bills and Hansard volumes that resulted from the passage of the Acts Interpretation Amendment Act 1984. It is examining which, if any, Senate and House records should be microformed to make the material readily available to interested organisations and individuals, and the most appropriate method of microform. In its report, which has been accepted by the Presiding Officers, the Inter-Departmental Committee recommended a reduction ratio of 24 x be adopted.¹⁶ It also indicated that quality and other format standards would be developed.

The Joint Committee was also informed that there is user resistance to reading lengthy documents in this manner. This view was supported by the AACOBs assessment that '... in many cases, the microform would be used as an archival copy while current demand would be met with paper copy...'.¹⁷ Converting the fiche to hardcopy was also a relatively expensive process vis a vis photocopying. AGPS indicated that the cost of a hard copy of a report from microfiche would be '... about 35 cents per page...'.¹⁸

Copying fiche to hard copy also led the Library Board of Western Australia to raise the issue of copyright.¹⁹ Currently, under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, only 10% of a document is permitted to be photocopied. The only exception to this provision is the blanket permission granted by the Attorney-General's Department to reproduce 100% of an act or statutory regulation when a copy of the original is not available from the local AGPS bookshop. The Board suggests that the reproduction of microfiche Parliamentary Papers should be similarly exempted. The Joint Committee considers that this proposal has merit. Given that permission to reproduce documents is for hard copy alone and that the documents included in the Parliamentary Papers Series are those of Government authorities (not private authors) such permission should be granted if copies are out of print. The Joint Committee recommends that any production of the Parliamentary Papers Series in microfiche should be accompanied by the appropriate amendments to copyright legislation to enable 100% reproduction of a paper in the restricted circumstances described.

The Joint Committee notes that on the costings for Bills Volumes given in the Inter-Departmental Committee's report, the subscription fee on a cost recovery basis for microform bound volumes would be substantially lower than that for hard copy. The Joint Committee believes that were this offered as an option, demand might be higher than that indicated for subscription for hard copy.

16. Evidence, p. 39.

17. Evidence, pp 208f.

18. AGPS, Additional Information, dated 16 October 1986, p. 1.

19. Library Board of Western Australia, Submission.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Joint Committee did not consider these options in isolation one from the other. It also considered further options that were formulated as a response to comments by recipients.

One such option was to assemble sets of the Parliamentary Papers as bound volumes and provide them to recipients without the case binding. This option arose from a suggestion that a less costly format may ensure the continuation of bound volumes. As discussed earlier this option was not available. The Joint Committee, however, also examined the possibility of assembly without case binding. AGPS informed the Joint Committee that on the present binding costs per volume of \$32.70, about \$14 relates to case making and binding the case on.²⁰ The savings on this proposal would therefore be less than half the current binding costs. As the Joint Committee was not satisfied that this option would be of benefit to recipients it decided to pursue it no further.

Another proposal raised by recipients was that the use of new technologies such as CD ROM might offer a better solution than microform.²¹ The Joint Committee sought advice from the National Library of Australia.

The National Library confirmed that the CD ROM has been used to publish both print and pictorial material, but that this has occurred mainly in the United States. In Australia, the process is still in its infancy and its acceptance, it was argued, and would depend on the cost of purchasing CD ROM players (likely to be in the region of \$8,000 each). There were also problems associated with the production of material in Australia in this form. The technology was available to 'master' the material into a suitable form to go onto CD ROM, however, facilities for the production of a master disc and pressing of copies from this are only available in the USA or Japan. This results in delays of approximately three months in the production of discs. Indications suggest that production of a master disc could well be in the order of \$25,000 to \$35,000, depending on the amount of text. On these estimates, replication costs would be between \$20 and \$8. The Library²² also advised that technology relating to CD ROM was still developing.

The Joint Committee, therefore, believes that a recommendation to introduce this technology to replace bound volumes would be premature. It believes that such technology may become more attractive as problem areas are eliminated and it becomes more price competitive. The Joint Committee intends to keep this option under frequent review.

In view of the possible introduction of new technologies which could be used to produce the bound volumes in an alternative format, the Joint Committee considered abandoning the option of microforming the

²⁰. AGPS, Additional Information, dated 16 October 1986, p. 2.

²¹. Evidence, p. 209.

²². National Library of Australia, Submission, dated 8 October 1986.

bound volumes. It was persuaded, however, that current use of microfiche would require a phasing-in period for any change to alternative technologies. This period would give the Joint Committee the opportunity to review the production processes for bound volumes.

The Joint Committee finally decided that a combination of options would be most suitable. In terms of cost savings, the most effective option is to cease the production of bound volumes. It believes, however, that there is a need to continue to supply some organizations to maintain community access. The Joint Committee therefore recommends that the number of sets of bound volumes prepared annually be reduced to 27. This would result in a cost savings (on current binding estimates) in the order of \$56,500 per annum. It would also enable run-ons to be reduced by 83 with a resultant savings of \$415,000 per annum. Total annual savings therefore would be in the order of \$98,000.

The Joint Committee also believes that organizations which are cut from the distribution list of bound volumes should have the option of maintaining access to the bound volumes of Series. It therefore suggests that the demand for microfiche bound volumes of Parliamentary Papers on subscription be examined before the Papers are produced in that format. The Joint Committee believes that this work should be conducted by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Microform. In evaluating the need to microfiche bound volumes the Inter-Departmental Committee on Microform should ascertain demand for both annual bound volumes produced after the above recommended reduction is implemented and also for previous annual sets of the bound volumes. The main purpose of microfiche past copies of bound volumes is for archival storage. If bound volumes are microfiched following the implementation of this reduction, the archival value will again be of significance. The Joint Committee understands that black and white microfiche only is suitable for long term storage (ie 150 years)²³ and therefore suggests that the Inter-Departmental Committee confines its inquiries to this medium. It is therefore paramount that the Class I standards be adhered to when printing reports likely to be included in the Series. The Joint Committee also notes the work done on the Western Australian State Parliamentary Papers Series by the firm Cameromics Technology Corporation Limited. The Joint Committee looks forward to receiving the Inter-Departmental Committee's advice on the above matters before taking a final decision relating to microfiche.

2. Distribution

The Joint Committee also examined the free distribution of bound volumes. The guideline currently applied in the administration of the free list is as follows:

That, unless the Presiding Officers otherwise determine, all State, State Parliamentary, Commonwealth departmental (excluding statutory authority), university, college of advanced education and municipal libraries, and appropriate overseas addressees as determined by the Presiding Officers, be eligible to receive one free set of bound volumes of

²³. Evidence, p.109.

Parliamentary Papers, Journals of the Senate and Votes and Proceedings, upon request.

This results in 10 categories of addressees which together receive 81 sets of bound volumes (see Table 4.2).

TABLE 4.2. ADDRESSEES IN RECEIPT OF BOUND VOLUMES²⁴.

<u>ORGANISATION OR BODY</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ADDRESSEES</u>
Commonwealth Departments	10
State Parliaments	6
State Libraries (including the Northern Territory and 2 sets to the National Library of Australia)	9
Municipal libraries	1
Universities	19
Colleges of Advanced Education	15
Overseas addressees	10
Commonwealth Parliament Offices	6
Parliamentary Library	1
Parliamentary Chamber Departments	4
TOTAL	<u>81</u>

Reserve Stocks of Bound Volumes

In addition to the free sets, 29 sets are stored to meet future demand. Both the Departments of the Senate and House of Representatives indicated in their submissions that reserve stock was not required. It was argued that not only could cost savings be secured but that valuable storage space for AGPS would be released. The Joint Committee notes the comments made in the 1977 Report on this issue and that the likelihood of new addresses to bound volumes would be low. This has indeed been the case in recent years and the Joint Committee is satisfied that under the new arrangements the number of possible new addresses has further decreased. The Joint Committee therefore recommends that the practice of maintaining reserved stocks of bound volumes cease. Further, the Joint Committee recommends that AGPS dispose of the current reserve stocks by providing missing stock to current recipients and other interested parties. Any remaining stock can be disposed of by AGPS.

Free Distribution

The Joint Committee was aware when it reviewed the free distribution list of the purposes of the Series and the responsibilities that the various categories of addressees were required to fulfil. After careful consideration, the Joint Committee recommends that free distribution to the House departments (the Departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives) and the Parliamentary Library be maintained. These organizations serve the Commonwealth Parliament. The number of sets provided to the House departments should however, be reduced from 2, to 1 set each. The Joint Committee also recommends that the National Library of Australia should be

²⁴. Evidence, p.7 and p.66.

maintained as a recipient of two sets of bound volumes as it houses Australia's national collection. For similar reasons, the Joint Committee recommends that the Australian Archives remain on the free distribution list.

The Joint Committee considers that a valuable aspect of the Series is the flow of information between the Federal and State Parliaments of Australia. It therefore recommends that free distribution be maintained to each of the State Parliamentary Libraries and the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. These Libraries currently provide reciprocal collections of Parliamentary Papers to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library. It was also clear from their submissions that this arrangement may be jeopardised, if any change was made by the Commonwealth Parliament to its distribution.

Finally, the Joint Committee is aware that one of the purposes of the Parliamentary Papers Series is to preserve the papers 'in a convenient and accessible form as a permanent record'. It therefore believes that a library accessible to the public should house one bound set of Parliamentary Papers. Accordingly, the Joint Committee recommends that State Libraries be maintained on the free distribution list. This action reflects the agreements issued in the Communiqué from the conference of Ministers with responsibilities for Arts and Cultural Affairs held in Canberra, on 24 February 1984.

The Joint Committee also considered the distribution of bound volumes to overseas recipients. The Department of the House of Representatives proposed that only those overseas libraries that are the main national or parliamentary library of a country, which also have exchange arrangements with the National Library of Australia should be eligible to receive bound volumes.²⁵ These criteria clearly establish the issue of bound volumes to overseas countries on basis of reciprocal arrangements with Australia. The Joint Committee, therefore, recommends that the issue of bound volumes be restricted to those overseas libraries that are the national or parliamentary library of a country which has an exchange arrangement with the National Library of Australia. Three international libraries will cease to receive bound volumes on the implementation of this recommendation.

In accordance with the above recommendations, the Joint Committee further recommends that the following categories be removed from the free distribution list for bound volumes:

- Commonwealth Departments
- Municipal Libraries
- Universities
- Colleges of Advanced Education
- Commonwealth Parliament Offices
- Overseas Libraries, which do not meet the above criteria.

The organizations in each of these categories will, if eligible, receive the pamphlet copies of the Parliamentary Papers. By halting

²⁵. Evidence, p.75.

distribution of bound sets to these addresses, production can be reduced to 27.

Conclusion and Revised Guideline

Considerable cost savings will result from reducing the production of annual bound volume sets from 110 to 27. Such a reduction can occur without detrimentally affecting the Series. The Joint Committee's recommendations ensure that distribution is maintained to each State and that the Series is housed in the National Collections, as well as providing the Series for the use of Federal and State Parliamentarians.

The Joint Committee, therefore, recommends that the guideline for the distribution of bound volumes be revised to read:

That, unless the Presiding Officers otherwise determine, the National Library of Australia, Australian Archives, all State and State Parliamentary libraries, and a country's national or parliamentary library with an exchange arrangement with the National Library of Australia, be eligible to receive one free set of bound volumes of Parliamentary Papers upon request.

CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER 5

ADMINISTRATION AND FUTURE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

Administration

This report is the first major review of the Parliamentary Papers Series by the Joint Committee on Publications since its 1977 Report. It believes that the administration of the Series as shaped by the 1977 Report, has been well conducted by the Parliamentary Departments that are responsible for organizing the printing and distributing the Papers. AGPS is responsible for printing and distributing the Papers under the Parliamentary Chamber Departments' direction.

In reviewing the cost and distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series, the Joint Committee noted that the guidelines, set down in its 1977 Report and used in the administration of the Series, required up-dating. This report, fulfils this task. Further, in conducting this review, the Joint Committee has made recommendations which, it believes, will result not only in cost savings but will ease some of the administrative difficulties that have been experienced by both those administering the Series and the recipients.

Implementing the Recommendations

The recommendations affect different elements of the administration of the Parliamentary Papers Series - the content, the production and its distribution. Government acceptance is required before any recommendation is implemented. On the assumption that Government acceptance will be forthcoming, the Joint Committee proposes the following implementation timetable which takes account of the different needs and priorities of each element.

- (i) Recommendations to be implemented on Government approval:
The Joint Committee recommends that the following recommendations can be implemented on Government approval
 - . camera-ready production (Chapter 3)
 - . alternative technology (Chapter 3)
 - . cumulative list of papers (Chapter 4)

- (ii) Recommendations to be implemented at the commencement of an annual Series: As the Parliamentary Papers Series is produced on an annual basis, the Joint Committee recommends that the consistency within each year be maintained by implementing the following recommendations at the commencement of a Series
 - . publishing guidelines relating to treaties, reports of delegations, Parliamentary inquiries and ad hoc committee reports. (Chapter 2).

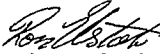
- guidelines for the distribution of pamphlet copies relating to secondary schools, Parliamentary Press Gallery and newspapers, overseas recipients and 'for sale' copies. (Chapter 3).
- production standards and the content of annual reports. (Chapter 3).

- (iii) Recommendations relating to bound volumes: Producing bound volumes involves two processes - the run-on production and the assembly and binding of the volumes. As the run-on production occurs at the same time as initial printing, run-ons have been completed to date. Work on binding, however, has commenced on the 1982 papers. The Joint Committee recommends that the recommendation reducing the number of sets of bound volumes and the associated changes to the free distribution be implemented in the binding of the 1983 sets of Papers. Further, the Joint Committee recommends that the existing run-ons be offered to those organizations that will cease to receive free sets of bound volumes.

The Joint Committee in devising this program for implementing the recommendations hopes to ensure a smooth transition to the new guidelines. Further, it proposes to maintain a continual review of the guidelines to assess their success and cost efficiency. In particular, it will monitor the use of the production standards in the printing of annual reports for departments and statutory authorities. The Joint Committee will continue its examination of aspects of the administration of the Series and will report as required to Parliament.

The Future of the Series

In conducting this review the Joint Committee received evidence from a number of organizations relating to the use of new technologies to produce Parliamentary Papers in mediums other than hard copy. These issues are discussed in Chapter 4. The technology, such as CD ROM and optical disk, offered new and exciting options to paper production as a means of disseminating information. The Joint Committee, however, found this to be promises for the future as such technology is still in its infancy. It, therefore, was not economically viable, and unlikely to be of use to many recipients who lack the necessary 'readers' to use the new mediums. Whilst the technology is not currently viable, the Joint Committee does not discount its use in the production of the Parliamentary Papers Series in the future. Before totally abandoning hard copy, however, the Joint Committee would need to be satisfied that it was not only cost competitive but that it did not disadvantage those who use the Series.


(Senator) Ron Elstob
CHAIRMAN

25 November 1986

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE SUBMISSIONS

Attorney-General's Department

Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services
(Victorian Regional Committee)

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Australian Defence Force Academy

Canberra College of Advanced Education

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization

Deakin University (2)

Defence, Department of

Flinders University of South Australia

Griffith University

House of Representatives, Department of

Industries Assistance Commission

James Cook University of North Queensland

La Trobe University

Library Board of Western Australia

Library Council of Victoria

Macquarie University

Melbourne College of Advanced Education

Monash University

Murdoch University

National Library of Australia

New South Wales Parliamentary Library

Newcastle Region Public Library

Parliamentary Library, Department of the

Queensland Institute of Technology

Queensland Parliamentary Library

Science, Department of
Senate, Department of
South Australian Parliamentary Library
Sport, Recreation and Tourism, Department of
State Library of Queensland
State Library of South Australia
State Library of Tasmania
State Library Service of Western Australia
State Reference Library of the Northern Territory
Swinburne Institute of Technology and College of TAFE
Tasmanian Parliamentary Library
University of Adelaide
University of New England
University of New South Wales
University of Sydney
University of Tasmania
University of Western Australia
University of Wollongong
Victorian Parliamentary Library
Western Australian Institute of Technology
Western Australian Legislative Assembly
Western Australian Parliamentary Library

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AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING SERVICE

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Mr Duncan Alexander Drew, Director, Policy and
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Mr Frank W. Thompson, Director, Publishing
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Mr Antony Broughton Barry

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY

Mr Michael John Brudenall, Deputy Parliamentary
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