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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

## FUTURE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

Report by the Joint Committee on Publications

December 1997

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## Joint Committee on Publications

Standing Order 22 of the Senate reads, in part:

- 22 (1) A Publications Committee, consisting of 7 Senators, shall be appointed at the commencement of each Parliament, with power to act during recess and to confer and sit as a joint committee with a similar committee of the House of Representatives.
- (2) All documents presented to the Senate which have not been ordered to be printed by either House of the Parliament shall stand referred to the Committee, which shall make recommendations on the printing of documents.
- (3) When sitting 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 related matters as are referred to it by the relevant Minister; and
  - (b) to send for persons and documents.
- (4) The Committee shall elect as its chair a member nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

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. All petitions and papers presented to the House which have not been ordered to be printed by either House of the Parliament shall stand referred to the Committee, which shall report from time to time as to what petitions and papers ought to be printed, and whether wholly or in part. 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.

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## MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

### **Senators**

Senator Sandy Macdonald (*Chairman of the Senate Committee and Chairman of the Joint Committee*)

Senator Mal Colston

Senator Paul Calvert

Senator Grant Chapman

Senator Jacinta Collins

Senator Brenda Gibbs (From 1 July 1996 until 4 September 1997)

Senator Jim McKiernan

Senator Belinda Neal (Until 1 July 1996, then from 4 September 1997)

### **Members**

Hon Lou Lieberman, MP (*Chairman of House of Representatives Committee and Deputy Chairman of Joint Committee*)

Mr Michael Cobb, MP

Ms Annette Ellis, MP

Mr Richard Evans, MP

Mr Alan Griffin, MP

Hon Stephen Martin, MP

Mr Stephen Mutch, MP

### **Secretariat:**

Mr Terry Brown, Secretary

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recommendation 1**

The Parliamentary Papers series should continue in its present form until there is a viable replacement either in electronic or printed form (or both).

### **Recommendation 2**

Ministers should ensure that agencies for which they have responsibility fulfil the obligation to produce sufficient copies of documents for the parliamentary papers series. A report identifying those agencies which default should be tabled in each House every twelve months.

### **Recommendation 3**

Government agencies producing parliamentary papers should publish the documents electronically as well as in print. The Committee intends regularly to monitor developments in this area and will report on progress in twelve months' time.

Where agencies do not produce these documents electronically, the reason for not so doing should be advised to the Minister in the letter of transmittal accompanying the document.

### **Recommendation 4**

As stated above in Recommendation 1, the Committee, having heard the evidence relating to the value of the parliamentary papers series, considers that the series should continue. It recommends, however, that the Presiding Officers should explore further the proposals of the Departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate relating to the replacement of the Parliamentary Papers series, and should establish a working party consisting of representatives of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (coordinator of reporting bodies), the Australian Government Publishing Service (or its successor within the Department of Finance and Administration) (co-administrator of the series), the Parliamentary Departments, the Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services and other relevant bodies, to examine and report to them within six months on the feasibility of such proposals. The Committee would be willing to assist the working party in its endeavours.

**Recommendation 5**

Pending consideration of the report of the working party, the Parliamentary Papers series continue to be provided free of charge to the National, State and Northern Territory libraries, to university libraries, to Commonwealth government departments and to other recipients on the current 'free list'.

**Recommendation 6**

Organisations not falling within the guidelines should be removed from the 'free list' for the parliamentary papers series.

**Recommendation 7**

Collated volumes of parliamentary papers should continue to be made available free to major libraries.

**Recommendation 8**

Administration of the series should continue to be the responsibility of the Department of the House of Representatives, assisted by the Department of the Senate, with the Australian Government Publishing Service (or its successor) maintaining its role on behalf of the Parliament. Unless there are good reasons to the contrary, the costs of the series borne by the Parliament should be more equally allocated between the Departments of the Senate and House of Representatives.

**Recommendation 9**

Ministers should ensure that agencies for which they have responsibility fulfil their statutory obligation under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968* to deposit a copy of their publications with the National Library of Australia.



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### The Committee

1.1 The Joint Publications Committee has been in existence in its current form for 27 years. It replaced the Printing Committee in 1970 when standing orders were amended to give effect to recommendations contained in the 1964 report of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications (the Erwin Committee) and to the subsequent government response to that report.<sup>1</sup>

1.2 The Erwin Committee reported that the Joint Committee '...could and should provide a healthy stimulus to continuing reform' of Commonwealth printing and publishing. Since its establishment, the Joint Committee on Publications has taken a close interest in the continued publication of the Parliamentary Papers series (PPS).

### The Reference

1.3 The inquiry was initiated by the Committee in response to a request for advice by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives (the Presiding Officers) on their proposal to discontinue the PPS. In order properly to consider the proposal the Committee sought information and views from interested parties.

### The Inquiry

1.4 The Committee takes as given the need for all branches of government to disseminate full and accurate information. When conducting this inquiry the Committee therefore sought to determine whether the Presiding Officers' proposal was compatible with providing widespread and equitable access to parliamentary and government information, thus facilitating the accountability of the executive government to the Parliament and the Parliament to the people.

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1 Australia, Parliament 1964, *Parliamentary and Government Publications: Report from the Joint Select Committee* (G E Erwin, Chairman), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 41 pp.  
Australia, House of Representatives 1964-66, *Votes and Proceedings: Ministerial Statement* (the Hon. W McMahon), 25 August 1966, vol. 1, pp. 629-631.

1.5 The Committee contacted all known recipients of the PPS including State and university and other libraries, informing them of the Presiding Officers' proposal and inviting them to make submissions to the inquiry. Fifty-eight written submissions were received from individuals and organisations as well as a number of supplementary submissions. A list of submissions may be found in Appendix 1.

1.6 The Committee held public hearings on 10 and 24 February, and 1 September 1997 at Parliament House, Canberra. Details of the hearings and the witnesses who appeared may be found in Appendix 2.

1.7 The Committee thanks all those who made submissions and those who gave evidence.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

#### **Definition of a 'Parliamentary Paper'**

2.1 Thousands of documents are presented to parliament (tabled) each year.

2.2 Many of these documents relate to legislation, principally delegated legislation, such as regulations and ordinances, which are tabled as 'deemed papers' in the House of Representatives and as 'Clerk's documents' in the Senate. Explanatory memoranda to bills are also tabled. Another major group or category of documents is comprised of those documents required to be tabled by statute, such as the annual reports of most government agencies. Parliamentary committees' reports and associated documents, such as volumes of submissions, comprise another major group of documents. There are also 'ad hoc' tablings of material such as press releases and journal articles and, in the Senate, documents tabled in response to orders made by that House for the production of documents by the executive.

2.3 All tabled documents are recorded and archived by the House departments and are indexed in the Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament. However, only some of these documents are selected by the Houses to become 'parliamentary papers'. These especially selected documents comprise a numbered and indexed Parliamentary Papers series (PPS). 'Parliamentary papers' are those documents judged to be of such significance that they should be made widely available, and include the annual reports of government departments and other agencies and parliamentary committee reports.

2.4 The Houses ensure that a document is selected as a parliamentary paper by adopting a motion that the document be printed. This motion may be moved in either chamber when the document is tabled. If the motion is carried, the document becomes a parliamentary paper. (Most parliamentary committee reports become parliamentary papers in this way.) For many documents, however, the selection process is delegated by the Houses to their Publications Committees which recommend in their regular reports to the Houses which documents should be printed. When a publications committee report is tabled, a motion is moved that the report be adopted. If this motion is carried the documents are 'printed' and become parliamentary papers. (Most annual reports of government agencies become parliamentary papers in this way.)

2.5 The 'printed' documents comprise the PPS. The future of the series is the subject of this report by the Joint Publications Committee.

### Previous inquiries

2.6 Arrangements for the publication and distribution of government documents at the time the Erwin Committee was established in 1962 were confused, even chaotic. The situation was described in that Committee's report as follows:

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

No single office can supply copies of all Commonwealth publications.

Arrangements for advising the potential user of Commonwealth publications as to (a) what is available, and (b) how to obtain them, are so inadequate as to be practically non-existent.

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

As each Department is responsible for the issue of its own publications, widely differing methods in the distribution of publications occur.<sup>1</sup>

2.7 The Erwin Committee made 67 recommendations in its 1964 report, ranging from a call to establish:

a central government publishing office...to undertake the publishing function of departments...to be called the Australian Government Publishing Service

to a recommendation concerning 'a continuing parliamentary review' such that a Joint Committee be appointed in each Parliament with power:

...to review the publications of Parliament and departments, their printing, publication and distribution...

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<sup>1</sup> Australia, Parliament 1964, *Parliamentary and Government Publications: Report from the Joint Select Committee* (G E Erwin, Chairman), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, p. 9

2.8 In exercising this review power, the Joint Committee has published nine 'special' reports since its establishment in 1970, three of which have been on the PPS. Among the recommendations in its first report on the series in 1971 were guidelines for distribution which, although restricting the then 'free list', remained generous. The report also recommended increases in the sale price of parliamentary papers to reflect more closely costs of production and distribution. In its 1977 report the Committee found that the guidelines for free distribution were basically sound and recommended only minor amendments. The Committee made 23 recommendations in the report which related not only to distribution but also to the content, cost, publication delays and indexing of the series.<sup>2</sup> The Presiding Officers and the government accepted most of the Committee's recommendations.<sup>3</sup>

2.9 In 1986 the Committee recommended that the guidelines for distribution be amended to exclude secondary schools and members of the press gallery from the 'free list' and to reduce the number of copies supplied to AGPS for sale from 100 to 25. The Committee made a total of nine recommendations which 'tried to balance this concern [for freedom of information] with the need to bring about cost savings in the production and distribution of the PPS'. In considering the future of the series, the Committee canvassed the possible use of new technologies for the dissemination of parliamentary and government publications but cautioned against their premature adoption. In its response to the report the government accepted that 'the Committee's recommendations appear to be an effective way of bringing cost efficiency to the PPS' but stated that implementation of the recommended new guidelines should not in practice limit community access to the parliamentary papers.<sup>4</sup>

## Purposes

2.10 Professor L F Crisp, in a submission made to the Committee's 1971 inquiry, suggested that parliamentary papers are published for three chief purposes: first, to inform members of Parliament by disseminating among them

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2 Australia, Parliament 1977, *Inquiry into the Purpose, Scope and Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers series: Report from the Joint Committee on Publications*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 35 pp.

3 Australia, Parliament 1978, *Statement by President: Inquiry into the purpose, scope and distribution of the Parliamentary Papers series: Report from Joint Committee on Publications*, 24 November 1978, Parl. Paper 2616, 3 pp + 4 pp attachments, Canberra.

4 Australia, Parliament 1986, *Review of the Cost and Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers series: Joint Committee on Publications*, Parl. Paper 450, 45 pp., Canberra.

material essential to the best functioning of the Parliament; second, to enable the general public to understand the transactions and discussions, and concerns of Parliament and its committees; and third, to assist the rising generation of Australians to understand the nature and purposes of Parliament, its transactions and discussions, and the issues it is confronting and dealing with.<sup>5</sup> Views expressed in submissions made to the current inquiry emphasised the importance of the provision of information to the proper functioning of parliamentary democracy. Mr Brian, President of the Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Australasia, for example, informed the Committee that:

The tabling of this material in Parliament...is surely based on the concept that the Executive, and other areas of government, as well as the subordinate parts of Parliament, are accountable to the Parliament. APLA believes that it is of paramount importance that Parliament retain and preserve its supremacy in our system of government. The on-going publication of the Parliamentary Papers series as a set and their preservation through deposit in libraries are important elements in the Australian Parliament's ensuring and maintaining this accountability.<sup>6</sup>

2.11 Allied with these purposes is a need to provide a proper record of government activity which 'should be freely available to citizens and scholarly researchers. For nearly a century and a half in the case of the States and nearly a century in the case of the Commonwealth, the parliamentary papers have formed a vital component of that record.'<sup>7</sup>

2.12 Specific benefits of the series for users, as identified in the submissions, include:

- government information is available to citizens;
- material is easily located in a single, numbered collection;
- an important resource is provided for libraries;
- libraries receive all important reports;

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5 Australia, Parliament 1971, *The Distribution and Pricing of Parliamentary Publications: Report from Joint Committee on Publications*, Parl. Paper 153, p. 62, Canberra.

6 Mr R Brian, Submission No 22, p 4.

7 Professor S Macintyre, Submission No 27, p 1.

- numerical sequence simplifies cataloguing and retrieval procedures;
- government and parliamentary information is made available to academic and other researchers; and
- sessional indexes are provided.

## Selection of papers

2.13 While not all documents tabled in the Parliament are included in the series, more than 50 per cent of substantial documents which are tabled are published as parliamentary papers. The following figures were submitted by the Department of the House of Representatives:

...in 1993 there were 832 substantial papers tabled in one or other House and of those 457 found their way into the parliamentary paper series. In 1994, the figure was 916, of which 484 became parliamentary papers. In 1995, the figure was 970, of which 497 became parliamentary papers and last year, the figure was 792, of which 421 became parliamentary papers.<sup>8</sup>

2.14 Over the past three years, between 64 and 80 per cent of documents in the series originated from the executive government and between 20 and 36 per cent from the Parliament. Executive government publications include annual reports of departments and other agencies. Parliamentary publications include Senate and House of Representatives Committee reports, reports of Joint Committees and the annual reports of the Parliamentary Departments.

2.15 Specifically, the series consists of the following classes of documents:

- reports of inquiries of parliamentary committees;
- statements of government policy (policy information (white) papers);
- annual reports of parliamentary departments, executive departments and statutory authorities;

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8 Mr L Barlin, *Committee Hansard*, 10 February 1997, p. 3.

- other executive reports tabled pursuant to statutory requirements, eg Australian Law Reform Commission and Auditor-General reports; and
- Budget and Budget-related papers.<sup>9</sup>

2.16 Principles for the selection of documents for inclusion in the series are determined from time to time by the Committee which also makes routine recommendations to the Houses as to individual titles which should be included.

2.17 The evidence indicated that there was general satisfaction with the selection of documents for the series. Miss Miller, Government Publications Librarian, La Trobe University, who also represented the Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services at the hearings, considered that 'the Joint Committee in the past has chosen very well their criteria for inclusion'.<sup>10</sup> Miss Miller added, however, 'there are a couple of extra things that I would love to see in, like the Family Law Council monographic reports. There are some annual reports that do not get into the parliamentary papers'.<sup>11</sup>

## **Distribution**

2.18 Free copies of parliamentary papers are distributed in accordance with guidelines determined by the Committee. A distribution list is reproduced below.

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9 Ms C Hogg, *Submission No 47*, p 1.

10 Ms A Miller, *Committee Hansard*, 24 February 1997, p. 64.

11 *ibid*, p. 68.



Table 2.1. Distribution list for free copies of the Parliamentary Papers series<sup>12</sup>.

RECIPIENT	SINGLE COPIES		'BLISTER PACKS'
	PARL. PAPERS SCHEME	AGPS LIBRARY DEPOSIT AND FREE ISSUE SCHEMES	
State, inc. National Library	1	8	9 (National Library x2)
Parliamentary	8		7
Municipal	4		
University	1*	32	27
Archives	8		1
Foreign embassies	18		
Political parties	4		
Overseas	8		4
Government departments	26		
Hunter Valley Research Foundation	1		
Department of the Senate	30 (or 50 for royal commission and committee reports)		1
Department of the House of Representatives	30 (or 50 for royal commission and committee reports)		1
AGPS		1	
Commonwealth Government Bookshop counter sales	14		
<b>TOTAL</b>	153 (193)	41	50

\* Australian Defence Force Academy

2.19 Until the time of the sale of elements of AGPS in 1997, parliamentary papers were distributed by AGPS, which also coordinated with author bodies the provision of extra copies of documents for the series, placed stickers on documents to identify them as parliamentary papers and stored and collated

<sup>12</sup> Figures based on data for 1996 supplied by AGPS marketing report: AGPS Free Distribution and Marketing System Customer Reports by Publication, for publications nos. 44 and 45.

copies for binding. Some of these costs were met by the Parliamentary Departments and some by AGPS.

2.20 Apart from playing a leading role in the administration of the PPS, AGPS also administered two related schemes for the dissemination of government publications. Documents published by AGPS were distributed to the National Library of Australia and to State reference libraries under the Library Deposit Scheme and to university libraries under the Free Issue Scheme. For ease of reference, these schemes are considered in this report as one and are referred to as 'the library deposit schemes'.

2.21 Following the sale of AGPS's printing and certain other production facilities on 8 October 1997, it is assumed that the community service obligations formerly undertaken by AGPS will continue to be performed in the public sector, within the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA). These include the activities described in 2.20 above for the administration of the library deposit schemes and the PPS.<sup>13</sup>

2.22 The formal distribution schemes should continue to be centralised, and for good reasons. Mr Mullins, Manager, Corporate Affairs, AGPS, informed the Committee that:

If there was no central library deposit scheme operating, libraries would have to place themselves on some 400 or 500 departmental mailing lists to ensure that they got a copy of ... annual reports or ... documents... So we fully support a central agency monitoring and administering an information dissemination scheme, whether it be a library deposit scheme or a government information service scheme.<sup>14</sup>

## Access

2.23 As may be seen from Table 2.1 in 2.18 above, the primary recipients of parliamentary papers are State, university, parliamentary and departmental libraries, and it is through Australia's library systems that the public has access to parliamentary papers. One witness, Ms Missingham, Convenor, Federal Libraries Information Network, observed:

...the wide geographical distribution of libraries and their high use by the Australian community, Commonwealth [departmental]

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13 see, for example, *Evidence*, p. 93.

14 Mr P Mullins, *Committee Hansard*, 10 February 1997, p. 26.

libraries included, contribute to the effective access provided to all Australians to the current Parliamentary Papers series.<sup>15</sup>

2.24 Ms Missingham referred to a study done for the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies which found that almost 70 per cent of the Australian population visited a public library between 1989 and 1994.<sup>16</sup>

2.25 Parliamentary papers are distributed more widely than documents distributed under the library schemes. For example, the twenty-six Commonwealth Government libraries which currently receive parliamentary papers are not covered by the library deposit schemes and neither are some other recipients of parliamentary papers such as foreign embassies.

2.26 The PPS includes more documents than do the library schemes. Not all documents which become Parliamentary papers are published by AGPS and, as stated in 2.20 above, it is only documents published by AGPS that are included in the library deposit schemes. (The Committee understands that, in fact, AGPS has used parliamentary papers copies to fulfil its responsibilities under the library deposit schemes.) One witness submitted evidence that only half of all documents tabled and ordered to be printed in 1994 were printed by AGPS. Among the important agencies which arranged their own printing in 1994 were the various Aboriginal land councils, the Australian Broadcasting Authority, the Australian Institute of Criminology, AUSTEL, and the Australian Wheat Board.<sup>17</sup> The Department of the House of Representatives estimated that only 30 per cent of the documents presented to Parliament were not published by AGPS.

2.27 Following the sale of AGPS's printing and publishing facilities on 8 October 1997, the Committee assumes that government agencies will not be able to arrange their publishing through AGPS. The committee expects that the library deposit schemes will continue, but there may well be even greater difficulties than in the past in obtaining the necessary copies for the schemes. In those circumstances, dependence on the PPS would increase and, if the PPS were discontinued without being replaced by another viable system, the number of documents distributed through the library deposit schemes could be expected to decline substantially.

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15 Ms R Missingham, Submission No 23, p. 5.

16 C Mercer, *Navigating the economy of knowledge: a national survey of users and non-users of state and public libraries*, 1995, Brisbane, Institute for Cultural Policy Studies. Quoted by Ms R Missingham, Submission No 23, p. 5.

17 Ms A Miller, *Committee Hansard*, 24 February 1997, p. 65.

## Recipients

### *National Library of Australia*

2.28 Section 201 of the *Copyright Act 1968* requires that the publisher of any library material published in Australia in which copyright subsists under the Act must deliver a copy of the publication to the National Library of Australia. The National Library nevertheless relies on the PPS. In his submission, Mr Horton AM, Director-General of the National Library, stated:

A recent survey conducted by the Library showed that most Commonwealth agencies have no knowledge of the requirement for them to place publications in the National Library. If the Parliamentary Papers series were to cease without further consideration of the issues, it is inevitable that the Library's holdings of government reports tabled in Parliament would be incomplete.<sup>18</sup>

### *Parliamentary libraries*

2.29 Witnesses from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library stated that the library makes extensive use of recent parliamentary papers and quite frequent use of older ones back to 1901. The parliamentary papers are regarded as an essential part of the permanent collection.

2.30 The CPL supplies many tabled papers, including parliamentary papers, to parliamentary libraries in the States and the Northern Territory and to the New Zealand Parliamentary Library.

### *State and Territory libraries*

2.31 The important role of State and Territory libraries in the distribution of government information cannot be overemphasised, and those libraries greatly value the PPS. Mr Clark, Manager, ACT Library and Information Management, stated:

The community relies on libraries—in particular, state and territory libraries—to obtain and make available the full range of parliamentary papers.<sup>19</sup>

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18 Mr W Horton AM, Submission No 39, p.1.

19 Mr D Clark, *Committee Hansard*, 24 February 1997, p. 74.

### *University libraries*

2.32 University libraries also are important disseminators of government publications. Mr Steele, University Librarian, Australian National University, informed the Committee that:

[The ANU Library's] collection is used extensively by undergraduates, postgraduates and academics from a wide range of disciplines. Staff (research and teaching) and students from sociology, history, law, economics, commerce, political science and administration (to name some of the main clients) consult the parliamentary papers as an archival and as a current collection. It must be emphasised that the academic community's interest is in the collected set not just in individual reports.<sup>20</sup>

### *Commonwealth departmental libraries*

2.33 As mentioned earlier, twenty-six Commonwealth government departmental libraries currently receive free copies of each parliamentary paper. Ms Missingham, who represented these libraries, told the Committee that the Commonwealth departmental libraries consider the series is essential:

The libraries generally do not lend that material because they consider it so important. Regarding the current use of the Parliamentary Papers series, every one of the 20 libraries that I consulted noted that their collection was heavily used, and that it was core material for policy advice and the administration of government policy.<sup>21</sup>

### *Government Info Shops*

2.34 As stated in the 1989 *Commonwealth Charter of Printing and Publishing Responsibilities*, the role of AGPS is to provide easy and affordable access to Commonwealth information. This is done partly through the Government Info Shops. (It is assumed that these shops will continue to be operated by the Commonwealth following the sale of certain parts of the former AGPS.) At the time of the public hearings, 25 free copies of every parliamentary paper were allocated for sale in the bookshops or on standing order. The number has since been reduced to 14. AGPS has kept any proceeds from those sales.

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20 Mr C Steele, Submission, p. 1.

21 Ms R Missingham, *Committee Hansard*, 10 February 1997, p. 32.

### *Exchange*

2.35 The PPS plays an important role in the acquisition of information from overseas parliaments. Dr Cope, Visiting Associate, School of Information, Library and Archive Studies, University of New South Wales explained:

...the policy of [the National] Library [of Australia] to acquire Australian parliamentary publications for sending to overseas countries so as to receive in exchange their similar materials...is essential...<sup>22</sup>

### *Other overseas*

2.36 As may be seen from Table 2.1 in para 2.18, eighteen foreign embassies receive parliamentary papers. The Committee understands that there are no reciprocal arrangements for the provision of similar publications to Australian delegations in foreign countries or to other Australian institutions. It seems that foreign embassies are on the free list as a result of the practice of Presiding Officers from the time of federation to accept requests for free issues of parliamentary documents so as 'to seek the widest possible dissemination of information regarding the activities of the Parliament'.<sup>23</sup> In its 1971, 1977 and 1986 reports the Committee accepted that foreign embassies should continue to receive free copies of parliamentary papers on request.

2.37 Some overseas universities may from time to time subscribe to the PPS. AGPS provides quotations each year to a number of institutions, including the University of British Columbia, Vancouver; Harvard College, Massachusetts; and Victoria University, Wellington<sup>24</sup>. Some of the universities may decide to subscribe to the series on receipt of the quotation. The Official Publications Librarian of Victoria University informed the Committee that:

We have received the Australian Parliamentary Papers since 1967 and they are a well used item in the Official Publications Collection.<sup>25</sup>

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22 Dr R L Cope, Submission No 41, p 3.

23 Submission of the Clerk of the Senate to the 1971 inquiry.

24 Mr P Mullins, *Committee Hansard*, 10 February 1997, p. 26.

25 Ms C de Wolff, Submission No 4, p. 1.

## Indexes

2.38 Indexes for this series are produced and distributed by the Department of the House of Representatives. Libraries consider that the index to the series is essential. It is used for filing and retrieval of the papers, enabling the libraries to make savings in these areas.

2.39 The Department of the House of Representatives in collaboration with the Department of the Senate also produces an index of all documents tabled in the Parliament, the *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament*. It is intended that this index will be made available on the Internet.

## Cost of the series

2.40 The parliamentary chamber departments currently meet the costs of producing parliamentary papers copies of parliamentary committee reports and some other reports, as well as indexing, postage and distribution and some administrative costs of the PPS. One substantial cost, that of printing the documents included in the series, was also borne entirely by the parliamentary departments until October 1995. These costs are now met by each author body, that is, by executive government agencies for annual and other reports and parliamentary departments, mainly for parliamentary committee reports. Prior to its sale, other significant costs were borne by AGPS which policed publishing standards, coordinated with authors the production of sufficient copies of their publications for the series and, on occasions, met the cost of reproducing documents that were not supplied in sufficient numbers.

2.41 Obtaining sufficient copies of documents for the PPS has been a continuing problem. In October 1997, the committee was informed that PPS copies had not been provided for 37 documents for the 1996 series (8.5 percent of the series) and that copies had not been provided for 7 documents in the 1997 series (4 percent of the series to date).

2.42 The costs of the PPS are summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Annual cost to Parliamentary and executive Departments of production of the Parliamentary Papers series

Activity	Department of the House of Representatives \$	Department of the Senate \$	Australian Government Publishing Service \$	Executive Department and Agencies \$
Production of documents	75 000	93 000		392 000
Labelling, packaging and postage	42 500	42 500		
Staff time	20 000	10 000		
Collated Volumes				
. binding	27 975			
. period ticketing and checking	13 750			
. distribution	13 500			
Storage			10 500	
Cost of reprinting papers (default)			27 000	
Compliance costs			25 000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>192 725</b>	<b>145 500</b>	<b>62 500</b>	<b>392 000</b>

Source: Evidence and Committee estimates for 1996-97



2.43 The total cost of the PPS is approximately \$790 000 per year. There are now 250 sets of the series produced, indicating that the price per set is \$3 160, or, with an average of 450 documents in each set, \$7.05 per paper.

2.44 As may be seen from Table 2.2, the Department of the House of Representatives meets a greater share of the costs of the series than does the Department of the Senate. Historically, the Department of the House of Representatives has been responsible for the production of the Parliamentary Papers Index and for the binding of the volumes. The direct costs of these activities amounted to approximately \$55 000 in 1996-97, with an additional \$20 000 estimated for staff time spent administering the series. The Department of the Senate estimates that staff costs for administering the series are between \$8 000 and \$10 000. The costs of labelling, packing and distributing loose copies of the documents are shared equally by both departments (\$42 500 each, annually).

2.45 AGPS met some costs which were not passed on to the Parliamentary Departments. Ms Hogg, former Acting General Manager, AGPS, stated that:

There has been some discussion about charges that AGPS currently makes to the Parliament. Our view is that those charges that are currently applied—and I think it was talked about in the estimates as \$90 000 to \$100 000—are underestimated ... it may be ... relevant in terms of any continuation [of the Parliamentary Papers series] that there is probably a shortfall of about 30 per cent in those charges.<sup>26</sup>

Dr Joye, the Acting General Manager of AGPS at the time of the September hearing, informed the Committee that AGPS, through DAS, would continue to ensure that copies of documents are supplied by authors for the series and that production costs which had previously been met by AGPS would continue to be met.<sup>27</sup> The Committee assumes that these functions will continue within DFA. Storage, which had formerly been provided without cost to the Parliament, may no longer be free. Mr Mullins stated that, following the sale of its printing facilities, AGPS will no longer have premises in which to store parliamentary papers awaiting collation. Storage will have to be 'out-sourced' and the costs passed on. Mr Mullins estimated that at market rates the cost of storing parliamentary papers is about \$10 500 per annum.<sup>28</sup>

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26 Ms C Hogg, *Committee Hansard*, 10 February 1997, p. 21.

27 Dr A Joye, *Committee Hansard*, 1 September 1997, p. 94.

28 *ibid*, p. 95.

2.46 A significant element in the cost of the PPS is the printing of the additional copies of documents needed for the series. Currently, an additional 290 copies of parliamentary committee reports and 250 copies of other documents are required. The appropriate cost is the 'run-on' printing cost, because the additional copies for the series should be produced as part of the original print run. The extra copies therefore should not attract any additional 'set-up' costs.

2.47 As stated above, printing costs for all parliamentary papers were met by the Parliamentary Departments until October 1995 when the executive government accepted responsibility for the printing of papers originating from that branch of government. The Parliamentary Departments continue to meet the printing costs for parliamentary papers versions of parliamentary committee reports and for some other documents which the Parliament orders to be printed. Before the sale of its printing facilities, AGPS met the additional printing costs when government agencies provided an insufficient number of copies and the costs could not be recovered from the agencies. AGPS estimates that it recovers only 50 per cent of these costs.<sup>29</sup> Additional printing costs met by AGPS are estimated to have been \$80 370 in the 37th Parliament, or approximately \$27 000 each year.<sup>30</sup>

2.48 Over time, the Committee and the Parliamentary Departments have effected economies in the series, while continuing to ensure ready access to government information. Savings were effected by the implementation of the Committee's recommendations in its 1971, 1977 and 1986 reports. Costs have been constrained by ensuring that agencies meet modest but appropriate production standards, by providing free distribution only to organisations which can best disseminate information and by reducing ancillary costs, such as those resulting from the binding of multiple volumes. Most recently, the Speaker of the House of Representatives reduced the number of bound volumes from 24 to three, resulting in savings to the Department of the House of Representatives of \$100 000 per annum.<sup>31</sup> Former recipients of bound volumes continue to receive plastic-wrapped collated volumes which they may themselves choose to bind.

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29 Ms C Hogg, *Committee Hansard*, 1 September 1997, p. 22.

30 Ms C Hogg, Submission No. 47A, p. 1.

31 Mr J Pender and Mr L Barlin, *Committee Hansard*, 10 February 1997, p. 15.

## CHAPTER 3

### PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

#### The Presiding Officers' proposal to discontinue the series

3.1 The Presiding Officers' proposal submits that the costs of the PPS now outweigh its benefits. The following extracts from the Presiding Officers' letter indicate their main concerns:

The series has existed to ensure:

- sufficient copies of important reports are available to those persons or organisations (Members of Parliament, public, departments, libraries, Australian Government Bookshops) which may wish to acquire a copy; and
- a permanent record of government and parliamentary activities is maintained in a numerical series. In addition, some (25 in 1995) sets of the series are bound in volume form.

It appears to us that the *raison d'être* for the series has diminished validity. These days most important reports receive wide circulation, and in some cases are available in other than hard copy forms.

Microform, CD ROM and other technologies (eg Internet) are now well advanced and are increasingly being used. It is noted that AGPS is endeavouring to produce a CD-ROM containing annual reports of executive and parliamentary departments and major statutory authorities, and a growing number of government organisations are placing more information, including annual reports, on the Internet. AGPS is also encouraging this practice and has made Budget papers and other reports available on the Internet. Some recipients of Parliamentary Papers have indicated to the Department of the House of Representatives...that they would prefer to have electronic access to this material. However, while alternative technologies may increasingly be used to provide alternative sources of some of the documents which currently constitute the Parliamentary Papers series, it should be recognised that the abolition of the series will mean that there will no longer be a single numbered collection of major documents tabled in Parliament which is readily available in the major libraries.

... Although the Parliamentary Papers series retains some value for dissemination of information and for researchers, considerable cost savings, both to the Parliament and author bodies, would be achieved if the series was discontinued. Demand for additional copies of tabled papers (eg for the Library Deposit Scheme) could be accommodated by including such requirements in tabling quantities or by AGPS obtaining the copies separately from authors.

... In conclusion, in our view, the series' retention cannot be seen as essential, it is a duplication in many respects and the considerable cost, both to the House departments and author bodies, seems unjustified in the present climate of financial restraint ...

The letter is reproduced in Appendix 3.

3.2 In summary, the Presiding Officers have advanced three reasons for proposing to discontinue the series, namely:

- (a) important reports receive wide circulation in various formats, including electronic;
- (b) the PPS duplicates other distributions of government and parliamentary documents; and
- (c) the costs seem unjustified in a climate of financial restraint.

These issues are discussed in the following paragraphs.

*'Wide circulation in various formats, including electronic'*

3.3 While the Committee accepts that a range of new publishing formats are beginning to be used, witnesses did not agree with the proposition that important documents are widely circulated. Dr Meredith, School of Economics, University of New South Wales, commented, for example, that in his experience:

... superficial media coverage of a report receives wide circulation, but the report itself is often quite difficult to obtain and involves considerable delays.<sup>1</sup>

Ms Edwards, Director of the Division of Library, Central Queensland University, informed the Committee that her organisation had great difficulty

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<sup>1</sup> Dr D Meredith, Submission No. 11, p. 1.

obtaining departmental reports because of the short runs which departments choose to make when they publish.<sup>2</sup> Other witnesses suggested that while documents may be readily available in Canberra this is not necessarily true elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

3.4 The range of documents available in these new formats is also far from comprehensive. While it is true that documents are increasingly available in electronic form, including on the Internet, the Federal Libraries Information Network (FLIN) informed the Committee that fewer than 1.5 percent of the 4000 to 5000 government documents published annually in hard copy are also published electronically. FLIN also informed the Committee that many of the documents which are available electronically are available only in text form, without maps, charts and tables, and some are available only in summary form.<sup>4</sup>

3.5 A significant number of parliamentary papers, however, are published electronically. All substantive Senate committee reports, for example, are now routinely made available on the Internet. This is a significant advance and a welcome development, but because many parliamentary papers still are not published electronically there would be a major gap in current information if the series were available only in electronic copy.

3.6 Publication in electronic form does not necessarily guarantee appropriate distribution or accessibility of documents. Internet access is not widely available in the community (fewer than 7 per cent of Australian households have access),<sup>5</sup> is likely to be costly, especially if documents are down-loaded, and electronic forms are not suitable for all uses. The Minister for Finance, when writing to the Chairman of the Committee to indicate his cooperation with the inquiry, stated that, while he supported the use of technology to reduce costs, he was 'mindful that access to the Internet and other on-line technology is limited in our community and would ask you to consider this issue during your deliberations'.<sup>6</sup>

3.7 Even within libraries, access to electronic copy is not necessarily readily available. The Queensland State Librarian informed the Committee that

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2 Ms J Edwards, Submission No. 10, p. 2.

3 See, for example, Dr R L Cope, Submission No. 41, p. 4.

4 Federal Libraries Information Network, Submission No. 23, p. 6.

5 *ibid.*, p. 6.

6 Minister of Finance to Chairman, Joint Publications Committee, *Correspondence*, 14 November 1996.

'bookings for the State Library's five public access Internet terminals indicate greater than 98 per cent occupancy, with some customers having to wait up to three days to secure a one hour booking'.<sup>7</sup>

3.8 Access to parliamentary papers in electronic form is not assured, not only for the above reasons, but also because selection of material for the Internet is 'random and haphazard'.<sup>8</sup> There are also technical difficulties for persons accessing the Internet which arise from the different formats used for documents and the use of different searching tools. As the Executive Officer of the Council of Australian University Librarians stated:

When the Chief Government Information Officer has standardised the electronic output of publications across government departments, and has provided a suitable publicly available Internet search facility across all Government departments, then will be the time to review the production of the Parliamentary Papers series.<sup>9</sup>

3.9 Particular problems arise in relation to preserving documents in electronic form. As the Presiding Officers have stated, the PPS exists to ensure that a permanent record of government and parliamentary activities is maintained in a numerical series. A number of witnesses indicated that total reliance on electronic output would not achieve this aim. The Librarian at the Australian National University commented:

Given the current state of publishing on the Net, it is difficult to see how the electronic output from ... government agencies can be archived and by whom. The departments are under no obligation to maintain archival records on-line or to publish back-sets on CD-ROM, floppy disk, magnetic tape, etc.<sup>10</sup>

3.10 The publication of documents in these formats, without a centralised, coordinated approach also fails to provide the comprehensive, permanent and structured resource currently provided by the PPS.

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7 Mr D Stephens, Submission No. 15, p. 2.

8 Mr W M Horton AM, Submission No. 39, p. 1.

9 Ms D Costello, Submission No. 46, p. 2.

10 Mr C Steele, Submission No. 31, p. 2

*'Parliamentary Papers series is a duplication'*

3.11 As described in Chapter 2, there are two official schemes for distributing government publications, the library deposit schemes and the PPS. Tabled documents which subsequently become parliamentary papers and which are published by AGPS (50 to 70 percent of all parliamentary papers) are distributed twice, once through the library deposit schemes when they are tabled and again as parliamentary papers some time later. State and university libraries therefore receive more than one copy of at least half of all documents in the series. These libraries obtain another copy when they receive the collated sets of parliamentary papers for binding.

3.12 This 'duplication' is welcomed by some libraries as the additional copies are available for loan or circulation to rural or regional libraries and libraries on different campuses. The Committee received the impression that the duplication leads to little waste.

3.13 Because the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library distributes copies of many documents tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament to State Parliamentary Libraries, the Northern Territory Parliamentary Library and the New Zealand Parliamentary Library, and these libraries are on the distribution list for parliamentary papers, they may also receive more than one copy of those documents.

3.14 Some documents which become parliamentary papers may also be distributed outside the formal schemes by government agencies which provide copies to interested parties.

*'Cost seems unjustified'*

3.15 The Committee has estimated that the annual cost of the PPS is \$790 000 (see Table 2.2). If the series were discontinued, and assuming that the Parliamentary Departments continued to print the same number of copies of committee reports as now, the Committee estimates that the annual savings to the Department of the House of Representatives would be approximately \$118 000 and to the Department of the Senate, \$53 000. Net savings would be less than this if the departments had to undertake administrative work for an alternative scheme or if inquiry work were to increase as a result of diminished public access to documents now disseminated through the PPS.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the expected savings may be significant for the departmental programs

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11 Mr J Vander Wyk, *Committee Hansard*, 24 February 1997, p. 89.

responsible for administering the series, and for the Parliamentary Departments' budgets as a whole. That is a matter for the Presiding Officers' judgement. The Department of the Parliamentary Library (DPL) submitted that potential savings of \$120 000 were relatively small compared with a total cost of parliamentary and legislative services of approximately \$300 million.<sup>12</sup>

3.16 Many witnesses were concerned that the proposal to discontinue the series, while perhaps saving money for the Parliamentary Departments, overall might increase costs to the taxpayer. Increased costs would be disguised by shifting costs from the Parliament to other publicly-funded bodies, principally libraries. FLIN estimated that:

If any library had to track down each report published in the Parliamentary Paper series, the total cost to the library would be close to \$6 000 per annum including staff time. For 320 Commonwealth libraries this would be a total cost of \$1.92 million. The Parliamentary Papers series clearly then provides a cost effective service for the whole of the Commonwealth.<sup>13</sup>

3.17 The same point was made in a joint submission from the libraries of the Departments of Finance and Treasury. The authors state that the cost within departmental libraries to identify, locate, down-load and bind individual documents would be greater than the time, cost and resources required for AGPS to produce the PPS and the Parliament to distribute them.<sup>14</sup> Support for the claim that libraries' costs would significantly increase also came from the Queensland State Librarian, who estimated that simply cataloguing all the individual reports presented in the PPS would cost \$12 800.<sup>15</sup>

3.18 The above estimates are based on the proposition that the series would be discontinued without providing any alternative. The Presiding Officers have envisaged that if the series were discontinued there would be additional demand for copies of tabled papers, eg. for the library deposit schemes, which could be accommodated by including such requirements in tabling quantities or by AGPS obtaining the copies separately from the authors. Clearly there could be costs associated with these requirements.

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12 Mr J Templeton, Supplementary Submission No. 42A.

13 Ms R Missingham, Submission No 23, p. 5 .

14 Ms R Wainwright, Submission No 50, p 2.

15 Mr D Stephens, Submission No 15, p. 3. This would be a "one off" cost for each and every library, unless cataloguing information were provided from a central point. There would still be costs to each library, which have not been calculated, if this procedure were adopted.



3.19 A more detailed alternative to the PPS was put to the Committee by the Department of the House of Representatives in a submission received in early January 1997. It proposed an enhanced library deposit scheme, and is discussed below. Most submissions had been received by then and so there was no real opportunity for most of the persons making submissions to comment on the more detailed proposal. However, witnesses at the public hearings were invited to comment.

### **Enhanced Library Deposit Scheme**

3.20 The alternative to the Parliamentary Papers scheme which is proposed by the Department of the House of Representatives would not rely on electronic distribution. It would attempt to ensure that all current recipients of documents under the current library deposit schemes would continue to receive hard copies. The library deposit schemes would be enhanced so that all documents published by the Government would be made available to recipients, not just those published by AGPS as is the situation now, nor just those ordered to be printed, as is the case for the PPS. The proposal would leave the library deposit schemes as the only formal scheme for the distribution of government documents and would eliminate overlap in distribution. The Department of the House of Representatives submitted that the proposed scheme would benefit recipients by providing more timely dissemination of documents, by including more documents, and by saving storage costs for parliamentary papers. The proposed scheme is set out in the Department's submissions which are attached as Appendix 4.

3.21 The Department of the Senate also raised with the Committee the possibility that the library deposit schemes could be enhanced to replace the PPS. The Department of the Senate suggested that stocks of documents for expanded library deposit schemes would be provided by the authors to the tabling officer of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet at the time that stocks for tabling were provided. Copies for the library deposit schemes would be sent to AGPS for distribution. The Parliamentary Departments also would make their committee reports available to AGPS for distribution at the time of tabling. The Department of the Senate did not support the proposal, however, because the numbered and indexed series as it now exists (and is seen by libraries to be of great reference and research value) would cease to exist. The Department's submissions are attached as Appendix 5.

3.22 The Department of the House of Representatives considered that there were two problems with their proposal, namely, that there no longer would be

an identification and numbering system for government documents and that there is no compulsion for agencies to publish with AGPS.

3.23 To address the first problem, the Department of the House of Representatives suggested that the index to the PPS could be replaced by the current *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament* in which all tabled papers are indexed. A change would need to be made to the *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament* index so that the identifying number currently given to parliamentary papers would be replaced by the number used within the House of Representatives for local identification (or by another unique specifically generated for that purpose). All tabled documents would retain the number first allocated in the index. The *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament* is widely distributed, and there are plans to make it available on the Internet.

3.24 It was not clear whether this suggestion, if implemented, would overcome the concerns of the libraries which value the availability of a numbered series. Mr Steele informed the Committee that:

Whichever supply arrangements eventuate (and, clearly, a central supply would be best), organisation of such an unnumbered series of titles would be costly, time-consuming, and, ultimately, counter-productive to effective research.<sup>16</sup>

3.25 The second problem identified by the Department of the House of Representatives would be overcome by the Government or the Parliament requiring agencies either to supply sufficient copies of documents to AGPS for distribution or to distribute copies directly to recipients. The Department of the House of Representatives suggested that legislation could be introduced to require agencies to make copies of documents available, and referred to relevant Acts of the New South Wales Parliament.

3.26 The Department of the House of Representatives suggested that if there were only one dissemination scheme, author bodies would be able to reduce by 200 the number of run-on copies required for dissemination. The Department of the House of Representatives concluded that discontinuation of the PPS and its replacement by enhanced library deposit schemes would result in 'substantial savings overall with no less information available to the public'.<sup>17</sup> The Department of the House of Representatives did not address the supply of documents to Commonwealth departmental libraries which are not eligible

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<sup>16</sup> Mr C Steele, Submission No. 31, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, p.3.

under the library deposit schemes, nor the supply of documents for sale through the Government Info shops.

### **Other proposals**

3.27 The Department of the Senate and other witnesses made a number of suggestions for changes to the existing series which could produce savings.

3.28 The Department of the Senate suggested that the free distribution list could be reduced by enforcing existing guidelines strictly, by reviewing the guidelines to exclude certain categories of recipients and by rationalising distribution to eliminate overlap. The proposal would remove foreign embassies and parliamentary libraries from the list. Organisations now receiving multiple copies would receive only one, and government agencies other than departments would be removed from the list. The Department of the Senate estimates that distribution could be reduced by 78 single issue copies. Another witness, while supporting the retention of the series, suggested that 'it may be cost effective and satisfactory to supply only the loose issues'.<sup>18</sup> The DPL, however, believes that pruning the list of recipients is not the best solution given the growth in the number of tertiary institutions, and the desirability of widespread public access to papers. Availability of papers for future use as well as for immediate use is essential.<sup>19</sup>

3.29 The Department of the Senate also raised as a possibility, but did not support, a proposal to eliminate the free list. All those wishing to receive the series could be required to pay a full subscription. Alternatively, the series could continue in its present form, but recipients would be charged a fee to cover the costs of administering the series. The Department of the Senate suggested a fee of \$1 500, noting that some legal publishers were already paying the Parliamentary Departments a service fee of about this order for assent prints of bills. (The production cost per set was estimated at about twice this price. See para 2.43).

3.30 Recipients were reluctant to accept that a fee should be levied. One considered that some citizens could be denied their right to have access to government information by allowing access only to those who could afford it.<sup>20</sup> Libraries were concerned about their declining budgets and their capacity to

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18 Ms P Hair, Submission No. 9, p. 1.

19 Mr J Templeton, Supplementary Submission No. 42A, p. 2.

20 Mr D Stephens, Submission No. 15, p. 1.

pay.<sup>21</sup> A university researcher thought that it would be regrettable if 'a Commonwealth funded organisation, such as a university, should find it necessary to purchase Commonwealth documents formerly available for its statutory education purposes'.<sup>22</sup>

3.31 The Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services stated that 'philosophically we believe this publicly accessible government information should be available free of charge to libraries, thus making it readily accessible to the public; however, if paying was to be the only way of obtaining the series in the future, then I think we would feel we would have to pay'.<sup>23</sup>

3.32 If a service fee were levied it would be impossible to forecast the outcome because the price elasticity of demand for the series is unknown. At best, the cost of administering the series would be defrayed by the users. At worst, so few organisations would subscribe that the series would not remain viable.

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21 Ms R Missingham, *Committee Hansard*, 10 February 1997, p. 38.

22 Dr A Daniel, Submission No 26, p. 1.

23 Ms A Miller, *Correspondence*, 28 February 1997.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The PPS since federation has given access to government information to parliamentarians, public servants, researchers, students and the general public. As an indexed and numbered series of principal tabled papers it is both unique and extremely valuable. The Committee on this occasion, as it has in the past, concluded that the series should continue, at least until there is a viable replacement either in electronic or printed form (or both). By 'a viable replacement' the Committee means a dissemination scheme which would continue to meet the aims of the Parliament when it orders that a document be printed. These aims, which were set down in the 1964 report of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications, are:

- (a) that adequate copies of a paper are available to all persons who wish to have a copy, and
- (b) that a paper is available to be bound into volumes and preserved in a convenient and accessible form as a permanent record.

4.2 The Committee could not support any action that would result in there being a period in which the series or a viable replacement was not produced. To do so would risk the recurrence of the chaotic situation which had arisen by the early 1960s which was described in the Erwin report and which led, among other things, to the establishment of the Joint Publications Committee.

4.3 The Committee accepts the Presiding Officers' desire to make economies by discontinuing the PPS and to apply the resulting savings to other services provided for parliamentarians. However, an alternative to the PPS would require funding, albeit by the executive government rather than the Parliament. In this regard, the Committee agrees with a statement made by the Department of the Parliamentary Library, namely, 'there is a cost for whichever institution handles the numbering and distribution of tabled papers. This cost must be recognised as a necessary component of achieving nationally distributed efficiencies and savings'.<sup>1</sup> The committee considers that there is little virtue in transferring the cost of maintaining the series from one group of publicly-funded bodies to another without good reasons.

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1 Department of the Parliamentary Library, supplementary submission no. 42A

4.4 The Department of the House of Representatives submitted that savings would be effected if its suggested alternative arrangements for the dissemination of tabled documents were implemented. Such savings could justify a change in the current arrangements, but the committee is not yet convinced on the basis of the available evidence that the suggested alternative arrangements would be viable. The committee considers that the cost of any alternative system to the PPS should be examined by a working group established to examine alternative schemes (see paragraph 4.12).

4.5 The Committee will recommend that the current arrangements for administering the series should continue, pending review. The parliamentary chamber departments should continue to organise the series, which should be administered for the Parliament by the executive government. Following the abolition of the Department of Administrative Services, the committee has written to the Minister for Finance and Administration asking that he advise on arrangements for the continuation of Commonwealth publishing responsibilities within the government.

4.6 The committee suggests that the *Commonwealth Charter of Printing and Publishing Responsibilities* should be revised as a matter of urgency and should require, as at present, that government agencies arrange for sufficient copies of tabled documents to be provided for the PPS. This will be essential, given that the agencies presumably are no longer able to arrange publication through AGPS. In the meantime the committee has written to ministers with portfolios asking that they remind all agencies for which they have responsibility of their obligation to provide copies of their documents for the PPS.

4.7 The committee also reminds ministers of the obligation of agencies under the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968* to deposit a copy of their publications with the National Library (see paragraph 2.28).

4.8 Although there was an implication in the Presiding Officers' letter proposing the discontinuation of the PPS that electronic publishing now offers a viable replacement, the evidence, including evidence given by the Departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives, showed that this may be some time off. At present there are concerns relating to equity and access to electronic documents, price and the retention of records. There are also concerns that the publication of government documents in this form, without centralised administration, would not provide the comprehensive, structured and accessible resource currently provided by the PPS. Nevertheless, electronic technology for publishing and disseminating documents is advancing

rapidly and may shortly provide a reasonable replacement for printed copies, at least in part.

4.9 The Committee would expect, given the pace of development in the field of electronic publishing, that the current shortcomings identified in paragraph 4.8 will be overcome in the next few years. It would encourage those agencies which are not yet publishing their documents electronically to do so, and all agencies to cooperate with national initiatives to distribute government documents electronically. The committee intends to monitor progress in this area as agencies' reports are tabled and will report annually to the parliament on progress.

4.10 As discussed in Chapter 3, the Department of the House of Representatives proposed that the library deposit schemes be enhanced to provide an alternative to the PPS. Having examined the detail of the proposal, the Committee considers that it has not been developed to the point where the Committee could judge whether it is a viable replacement for the Parliamentary Papers scheme.

4.11 Issues raised in the proposal which need to be addressed more thoroughly are the cost and comprehensiveness of the proposed scheme, the supply of documents for the scheme, the supply of documents to some organisations which receive documents through the PPS but not the library deposit schemes, (notably Commonwealth government departments), the detailed provision of a replacement index and numbering scheme and a firm proposal as to who would administer the scheme and how.

4.12 Before recommending that the PPS be discontinued in favour of enhanced library deposit schemes the Committee would need to be satisfied that the matters listed in paragraph 4.11 had been thoroughly addressed. The Presiding Officers should explore proposals for alternatives to the PPS, and should establish a working party consisting of representatives of the Parliamentary Departments, the Department of Finance and Administration (co-administrators of the PPS), the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (coordinator of reporting bodies), the Australian Government Publishing Service (or its successor), the Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services and other relevant bodies, to examine and report to them on the feasibility of such proposals. This working group should report within a relatively short time so that any resulting changes to the PPS could be implemented at the beginning of the thirty-ninth Parliament. The committee suggests that six months would provide enough time for the establishment and report of the working group.

4.13 There were other proposals put to the Committee by witnesses for changes to the PPS which, while retaining the scheme, would achieve economies. Principal among these was a proposal to charge recipients a service fee for indexing, numbering, storing and distributing the series.

4.14 The Committee has concerns with the concept of charging the public for the provision of government information. There may be some justification, however, for charging for the costs of dissemination of that information or for charging a service fee for value added to the information, for example, for the indexing and numbering of the series. The Committee, however, does not favour the levying of service or distribution fees for the PPS. Without an indexed and numbered series, the information disseminated would be significantly devalued and it has been accepted for many years that the numbering, indexing and distribution of government documents to libraries is a community service provided by the Government and the Parliament.

4.15 The Department of the Senate suggested that economies could be achieved by enforcing more strictly the guidelines for free distribution and by amending the guidelines in some respects.

4.16 The Committee considered suggestions made in evidence that the guidelines for free distribution should be amended to exclude certain recipients. The Committee recommends that organisations not falling within the guidelines should be removed from the free list. The free distribution to the High Court of Australia should continue, however, if the Court wishes to continue to receive the series.

4.17 Eighteen foreign embassies are on the 'free list' although apparently there is no reciprocity accorded to Australian delegations in the nations which support those embassies. A few municipal libraries also are included although the series is available through State libraries and public access through municipal libraries is limited to a small geographic area. The Committee has decided not to review the guidelines at this time, but will do so if any replacement for the PPS is recommended by the working party and subsequently adopted.

4.18 There were also suggestions made during the inquiry that some recipients of the series would be satisfied to receive only the loose copies of documents in the series. Discontinuation of the collated volumes would effect savings, but the Committee does not recommend that this be done because of the importance attached to the series as a permanent record.



4.19 Finally, given the financial burden on the Department of the House of Representatives, the Committee recommends that the Department of the House of Representatives and the Department of the Senate share equally the costs of administering the series.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Macdonald', written in a cursive style.

Sandy Macdonald  
CHAIRMAN

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

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Appendix 2	List of Public Hearings and witnesses
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Appendix 5	Submission from the Clerk of the House of the Senate (Submissions 54, 54a)

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **LIST OF CORRESPONDENCE/SUBMISSIONS**

1. Ms Corinna de Wolff, Official Publications Librarian, Victoria University of Wellington, NEW ZEALAND.
2. Dr Russell L Cope, Visiting Associate, School of Information, Library and Archive Studies, University of New South Wales, SYDNEY, NSW.
3. Dr Howard Dick, Senior Lecturer, Department of Business Development and Corporate History, University of Melbourne, PARKVILLE, VIC.
4. Ms Corinna de Wolff, Official Publications Librarian, Victoria University of Wellington, NEW ZEALAND.
5. Mr/Ms J E King, Reader in Economics, School of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, La Trobe University, BUNDOORA, VIC
6. Professor Alan Frost, School of History, La Trobe University, BUNDOORA, VIC
7. Ms Dianne Beaumont, Government Publications Librarian, State Library of Victoria, MELBOURNE, VIC
8. Professor Edward Lim, University Librarian, Monash University, CLAYTON, VIC
9. Ms Philippa Hair, Assistant Law Librarian, Macquarie University, NSW
10. Ms Judith Edwards, Director of Division of Library, Information and Media Services, Central Queensland University, ROCKHAMPTON, QLD
11. Dr David Meredith, School of Economics, University of New South Wales, SYDNEY, NSW
12. Ms Evelyn Woodberry, Library Manager, Bond University, GOLD COAST, QLD

13. Professor Patrick O'Farrell, School of History, University of New South Wales, SYDNEY, NSW
14. Ms Doreen Parker, University Librarian, Victoria University of Technology, MELBOURNE, VIC
15. Mr Des Stephens, State Librarian, State Reference Library of Queensland, BRISBANE, QLD
16. Mr William T Cations, University Librarian, Flinders University of South Australia, ADELAIDE, SA
17. Associate Professor Judith Brett and 12 Members of the School of Politics, La Trobe University, BUNDOORA, VIC
18. Professor Roger Wettenhall, Acting Director, Centre for Research in Public Sector Management, University of Canberra, ACT
19. Ms Elizabeth Ho, Assistant Librarian, State Library of South Australia, ADELAIDE, SA
20. Mr Timothy J Brown, Government Publications Librarian, Parliament of Victoria Library, MELBOURNE, VIC
21. Mr James O'Brien, Head, Library and Information Services, University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, CAMPBELLTOWN, NSW
22. Mr Rob Brian, President, Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Australasia, c/o Parliament House, SYDNEY, NSW
23. Ms Roxanne Missingham, Convenor, Federal Libraries Information Network (FLIN), c/o National Library of Australia, CANBERRA, ACT
- 23A Supplementary submission
24. Mr Dagmar Schmidmaier, State Librarian, State Library of New South Wales, SYDNEY, NSW
25. Ms Marian Bate, Principal Librarian, University of New South Wales, SYDNEY, NSW

26. Dr Ann Daniel, Associate Professor and Head of School of Sociology,  
University of New South Wales, SYDNEY, NSW
27. Professor Stuart Macintyre, President, Australian Historical Association
28. Dr Russell L Cope, Visiting Associate, School of Information, Library and  
Archive Studies, University of New South Wales, SYDNEY, NSW
29. Ms Susan Little, Reference Librarian, Government Publications,  
Humanities and Social Sciences Library, Monash University, CLAYTON,  
VIC
30. Members of the School of History, University of New South Wales,  
SYDNEY, NSW
31. Mr Colin Steele, University Librarian, Australian National University,  
CANBERRA, ACT
32. Mr John McKinlay, University Librarian, James Cook University of North  
Queensland, TOWNSVILLE, QLD
33. Ms Julie Fitzgerald, Librarian: Collection Management, Edith Cowan  
University, Churchlands Campus, PERTH, WA
34. Mr Earle Gow, Chief Librarian, La Trobe University, BUNDOORA, VIC
- 34A Letter elaborating on evidence given to the committee by Miss Ann  
Miller, Government Publications Librarian, La Trobe University,  
Bundoora, Vic
35. Mr David Clark, Manager, ACT Library and Information Management,  
CANBERRA, ACT
36. Mr Tony Marshall, A/Manager (Reference and Information Services),  
State Library Service, State Library of Tasmania, HOBART, TAS
37. Ms Helen Tait, Director, State Library of Victoria, MELBOURNE, VIC
38. Ms Helen Hayes, University Librarian, University of Melbourne,  
MELBOURNE, VIC

39. Mr W Horton AM, Director-General, National Library of Australia, CANBERRA, ACT
40. Associate Professor Richard Broome, School of History, La Trobe University, BUNDOORA, VIC
41. Dr Russell L Cope, Associate Professor, School of Information, Library and Archive Studies, University of New South Wales, SYDNEY, NSW
42. Mr John W Templeton, Acting Parliamentary Librarian, Department of the Parliamentary Library, Parliament House, CANBERRA, ACT
43. Ms Kate Sexton, Acting University Librarian, University of Sydney Library, University of Sydney, SYDNEY, NSW
44. Ms Helen Hayes, President, Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services (ACLIS), Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne, MELBOURNE, VIC
45. Mr John Arnold, Deputy Director and Ms Patricia Holt, Researcher and Indexer, International Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, CLAYTON, VIC
46. Ms Diane Costello, Executive Officer, Council of Australian University Librarians, Australian National University, ACT
47. Ms Carolynn Hogg, Acting General Manager, Australian Government Publishing Service, CANBERRA, ACT
- 47A Supplementary submission
48. Dr Elizabeth Morrison, 25 Denham Street, HAWTHORN, VIC
49. Ms M Macpherson, Executive Director, Division of Library Services, Wagga Campus Library, Charles Sturt University, WAGGA WAGGA, NSW
50. Ms Rosina Wainwright, Director Information Services, The Treasury, CANBERRA, ACT

51. Mr Bill Linklater, University Librarian, University of Newcastle,  
NEWCASTLE, NSW
52. Mr Lyn M Barlin, Clerk of The House of Representatives, Department of  
The House of Representatives, Parliament House, CANBERRA, ACT
- 52A Supplementary submission
53. Lyn Allen, Chief Executive Officer, Library and Information Service of  
Western Australia, PERTH, WA
54. Mr Harry Evans, Clerk of the Senate, Department of the Senate,  
Parliament House, CANBERRA, ACT
- 54A Supplementary submission
55. Mr Martin Bonsey, First Assistant Secretary, Government Division,  
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, CANBERRA, ACT
56. Ms Frances Awcock, Director, State Library of South Australia for the  
Council of State Libraries, ADELAIDE, SA
- 56A Supplementary submission
57. Mr George Nichols, Australian Archives, CANBERRA, ACT
58. The Hon John Fahey MP, Minister for Finance, CANBERRA, ACT

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **LIST OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND WITNESSES**

**Monday 10 February 1997 - Canberra**

**Department of the House of Representatives**

Mr Lyn Barlin, Clerk of the House  
Mr Jim Pender, Clerk Assistant (Table)  
Ms Colleen Cameron, Assistant Director, Table Office

**Australian Government Publishing Service**

Ms Carolyn Hogg, Acting General Manager  
Mr Paul Mullins, Manager, Corporate Affairs  
Mr Ron Hutchison, Manager, Production Control

**Federal Libraries Information Network (FLIN)**

Ms Roxanne Missingham, Convenor

**Department of the Parliamentary Library**

Mr John Templeton, Acting Parliamentary Librarian  
Ms Nola Adcock, Deputy Head, Information and Research Services  
Ms Margaret Healy, Specialist, Politics and Public Administration

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**Monday 24 February 1997 - Canberra**

**Centre for Research in Public Sector Management, University of Canberra**

Mr John Laver, Member, Executive Committee  
Professor Roger Wettenhall, Acting Director

**Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services**

Miss Ann Miller, Government Publications Librarian, La Trobe University

**Council of Australian State Libraries**

Mr David Clark, Representative

**Department of the Senate**

Mr Harry Evans, Clerk of the Senate  
Mr John Vander Wyk, Clerk Assistant (Table)  
Ms Rosa Ferranda, Senior Parliamentary Officer (Legislation and Documents)



**Monday 1 September 1997 - Canberra**

**Australian Government Publishing Service**

Dr André Joye, Acting General Manager

Mr Paul Mullins, Manager, Corporate Affairs

Mr Jeremy Gregson, Manager, On-Line Facilities

**Department of Administrative Services**

Mr Brendan Godfrey, Deputy Secretary, Business Development

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **PRESIDING OFFICERS' LETTER**



## PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

*Speaker of the House of Representatives*

*President of the Senate*

Chair  
Joint Committee on Publications

### PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

We are considering discontinuing the production of the Parliamentary Papers Series.

The Parliamentary Papers series has been in existence since Federation, and, among other things, sought to provide a convenient and accessible permanent record of parliament and government. We believe that, in the tight budgetary environment that the Parliament faces, the continuation of the series in its current, discrete hard copy format cannot be sustained. Before progressing further, we feel it desirable to obtain the advice of your Committee.

#### *Publications Committee involvement*

The Joint Committee on Publications (JCP), and its predecessors, has had a long term interest in the series, and has developed guidelines on the range of material which should be included in it. The Publications Committees of each House regularly report on those papers which they consider should be included in the series. In recent years, the annual series has comprised 450 to 490 papers, and now costs the two Chamber departments in the order of \$250 000 p.a. to produce.

The JCP and earlier committees previously have considered the merits of the series, and were conscious of the need for economy. Prior to the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications which reported in 1964, the series contained reports and the like that had been presented to Parliament but which had not been printed by the author body in sufficient quantities for an adequate distribution to be made. The then Printing Committee was keen to avoid the series duplicating measures already taken, but was always keen to ensure availability.

The JCP, in 1977 and 1986, reviewed the series. The 1977 Committee acknowledged submissions calling for the series to be produced in alternative forms to hard copy which would enable savings in space and easier referral. On both occasions, the JCP saw merit in

continuing the series, and in a hard copy form, mainly because suitable alternatives (eg microform, CD-ROM) were not well developed or widespread.

### ***Should the series be maintained?***

The series has existed to ensure:

- sufficient copies are available to those persons (Members of Parliament, public, departments, libraries, Australian Government Bookshops) who may wish to acquire a copy; and
- a permanent record of government and parliamentary activities is maintained in a numerical series. Some (25 in 1995) sets in the series are bound.

It appears to us that the *raison d'être* for the series has diminished validity. Most reports receive wide circulation, and often are available in other than hard copy forms.

Microform, CD ROM and other technologies (eg Internet) are now sufficiently advanced to warrant further examination as viable alternatives or augmentations/replacements to the series. It is noted that AGPS is endeavouring to produce a CD-ROM containing annual reports, and a growing number of government organisations are placing more and more information, including annual reports, on the Internet. AGPS is also encouraging this practice and has made Budget papers and other reports available on the Internet. Some recipients of Parliamentary Papers have indicated to our departments that they would prefer to have electronic access to this material.

A significant factor against retaining the series is its substantial cost. Prior to 1995-96, the Chamber departments met all costs, amounting to about \$700 000 p.a. In addition, the Department of the House of Representatives (DHR) met all binding costs, approximately \$100 000 p.a. Since 1 October 1995, all author departments, including both House Departments (in respect of their own annual reports and all committee reports) are required to provide Parliamentary Paper stock (mostly 290 copies - 330 for the House departments) at an average cost of approximately \$1000 per title, in addition to their tabling stock (366 copies). The House departments still need to fund labelling and distribution costs for Parliamentary Paper versions (approx \$100 000 p.a.), and to bear the administrative imposts associated with compiling the series. Other costs include DHR meeting the binding costs (\$75 000+ p.a. now), as well as producing a separate index to Parliamentary Papers.

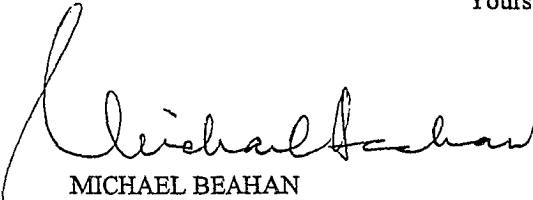
### ***Conclusion***

Although the Parliamentary Papers series retains some value for dissemination of information and for researchers, considerable cost savings, both to the Parliament and author bodies, would be achieved if the series was discontinued. Demand for additional copies of tabled papers (eg for the Library Deposit Scheme) could be accommodated by including such requirements in tabling quantities or by AGPS obtaining the copies separately from authors.

It is likely that there could be concern on the part of some recipients if the series was to be discontinued. It is also likely that not all documents presently included in the series would be available from author agencies. Nevertheless, substantial sums are involved in maintaining the series, the House departments' budgets are under severe pressure, and while the series has been useful in disseminating information widely, much of it has been executive, not parliamentary, information. If the series is discontinued, we will ensure that adequate distribution of parliamentary committee reports and other significant parliamentary publications is maintained, but the onus to ensure distribution of executive information will then be with the executive government.

In conclusion, in our view, the series' retention cannot be seen as essential, it is a duplication in many respects and the considerable cost, both to the House departments and author bodies, seems unjustified in the present climate of financial restraint. Before proceeding further on this matter, however, we would welcome any views the Committee may wish to express on it.

Yours sincerely



MICHAEL BEAHAN



BOB HALVERSON

27 NOV 1991

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **SUBMISSIONS FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (SUBMISSIONS 52, 52A)**

# Joint Committee on Publications

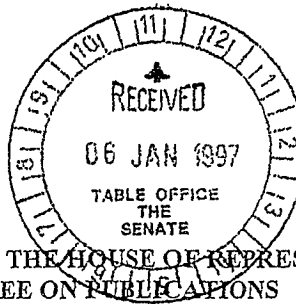
## Inquiry into the Proposed Discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series

Correspondence/Submissions Received by Committee

No. 52

Response from: LM Barlin, Clerk of the House,  
House of Representatives, Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT

Received on: 6 January 1997



**SUBMISSION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS**

**PROPOSED DISCONTINUATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES**

**Summary**

This submission puts the case for the discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS).

It:

- provides background on the series, including the original objectives of the series; and
- puts the case for its discontinuation on the grounds of:
  - cost;
  - the availability of other arrangements to meet the objectives of the series (and the level of duplication already existing);
- notes that while the Parliament may be regarded as responsible for the dissemination of information originating from the Parliament (such as committee reports), most of the papers included in the PPS are Government documents and the submission queries whether it is Parliament's responsibility to disseminate such information;
- gives details on the present distribution of the PPS;
- describes other existing arrangements for the dissemination of reports and identifies means by which some weaknesses in these alternatives could be overcome should the series be discontinued; and
- offers to provide any additional information the committee may require.



## **1. Inquiry**

On 27 June 1996 the Hon. R.G. Halverson OBE, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Senator the Hon. M. Beahan, (then) President of the Senate, wrote to the Joint Committee on Publications informing the committee that the discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS) was being considered and seeking advice from the committee on the matter. In October the committee resolved to inquire into the matter before providing that advice to the Presiding Officers.

The Department of the House of Representatives (DHR) submits the following advice and information to the committee.

## **1. History**

The PPS has been in existence, in one form or another, since Federation and has been intended to provide a convenient and accessible permanent record of certain papers concerning the parliament and government.

In addition to the papers contained in the PPS, prior to 1963 certain papers, including committee reports, relating solely to either the House or the Senate were issued in a separate series, designated "H of R" or "S", and (prior to 1961) published in bound form in the Votes and Proceedings or Journals volumes respectively. There was also a limited number of papers printed for general access, however, there was, at this point, no external distribution of these parliamentary papers.

In 1964, the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications recognised that many Commonwealth publications of importance to Parliament were not printed as parliamentary papers. It recommended that all reports, returns and statements of departments, authorities, *ad hoc* committees of inquiry, delegates to conferences, Royal Commissions and the like, presented to Parliament be published as parliamentary papers. They also recommended that the parliamentary papers be numbered on a calendar year basis and that they be bound in annual volumes. This recommendation came into effect beginning with the calendar year 1967.

Until 1967, parliamentary papers were numbered in an arithmetical sequence on a sessional basis, a new series of numbers commencing with each new session - sessions sometimes lasted up to 3 years. At the time some 400 to 500 copies of each Parliamentary Paper were being distributed in accordance with a free distribution list maintained under the joint control of the Presiding Officers.

In 1977, the Joint Committee on Publications in its report *Inquiry into the Purpose, Scope and Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series* recommended rationalisation of the free distribution list, and this subsequently resulted in a reduction of the free list. It also recommended that the Australian Treaty Series be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series.

In 1986, the Joint Committee on Publications in its report *Review of the Cost and Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series* recommended a further reduction of the free list and also

that the series should no longer include the Australian Treaty Series, reports of delegates to conferences and international visits and interim reports of parliamentary committees.

### **3. Department of the House of Representatives' view**

The DHR supports the discontinuation of the PPS for several reasons:

#### **3.1 *Finances***

It is timely to examine whether the DHR (and possibly the Senate) can continue to fund the PPS given the requirements to reduce the budgets of the departments (*see item 5*). Other functions such as the requirements of the legislation process, or the provision of equipment, advice and assistance to Members are regarded as being more pressing at this time. It is noted that executive departments and agencies, in respect of their own annual reports, and the parliamentary departments, in respect of committee reports, are required to provide copies of documents for use in the Parliamentary Papers Series at an average cost of approximately \$1,000 per title, in addition to their tabling stock, ie the copies supplied when a report is tabled. This translates into additional costs estimated at some \$140,000 for the House Departments (and this excludes salary and related costs)(*see item 5*).

#### **3.2 *Alternative systems***

The series has existed to ensure that there is a permanent record of government and parliamentary activities available to the Australian public through libraries. It is evident that this can be, and indeed to a large degree is being, achieved by existing alternative systems such as the AGPS Library Deposit and Free Issue Schemes and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library arrangement with State Parliamentary libraries. In fact there appears to be a good deal of duplication in the distribution of the documents which form the PPS (*see item 6*).

#### **3.3 *Appropriateness of function***

These days the PPS is comprised mainly of executive Government reports, such as annual reports of government departments and agencies, industry commission reports etc. The question arises as to where the responsibility for dissemination of these reports belongs. The DHR accepts that the responsibility for the dissemination of Parliamentary publications (such as committee reports) falls to the Parliamentary Departments but is of the opinion that the dissemination of executive reports is the responsibility of the executive.

### **4. Production of the series**

Currently 50 recipients receive the Parliamentary Papers Series free of charge in either of two forms:

#### **4.1 *Bound form***

In previous years the PPS bound volumes have been up to 7 years behind in production. This was due largely to author bodies not supplying the AGPS with copies of their reports at the time of publication for inclusion in the series. In many cases the author body did not print sufficient copies for the series. This situation has been addressed by the AGPS and the DHR by implementing a system whereby the series is produced on a rolling basis

and any report not made available by the author body in a timely fashion is photocopied by the AGPS and included in the PPS in that form with the DHR having to carry the cost of the photocopying.

The sets of Parliamentary Papers are produced on a calendar year basis. There is an average of 40 volumes consisting of up to 500 papers in each set. There have been 23 recipients of Parliamentary Papers Series in this form. On 11 October 1996 the Speaker approved a reduction in the number of bound sets from 23 to 3 with former recipients of the series in bound form to receive the volumes in blister pack form, pending a final decision as to the future of the series (*see attachment A*).

It is noted that all recipients of the series in bound form also receive the series in pamphlet form directly from the AGPS under the Library Deposit or Free Issue Schemes.

#### **4.2 Blister pack form**

In addition to the bound sets, the series is also distributed in the form of blister packs. These packs are provided free of charge to the recipients and consist of collated parliamentary papers together with index and contents pages ready for binding by the receivers at their cost. There are currently 27 recipients of Parliamentary Papers Series in this form. The Speaker's approval of a reduction in the numbers to be distributed in bound form, as previously mentioned, will increase this number to 47 (*see attachment B*).

### **5. Finances**

#### **5.1 Current costs**

Operational costs of the series are shown in the table below and are not inclusive of administrative costs incurred by the DHR.

Item	Approximate annual cost
Labelling and packaging*	42,500
Period ticketing (checking procedures)	13,750
Production of bound volumes (post Speaker's decision)	27,975
Distribution of volumes	13,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97,725</b>

\* The cost of labelling and packing is shared between the two House departments - the cost shown in the table is the DHRs' share only.

#### **5.2 Savings to House of Representatives if PPS discontinued**

The DHR stands to make savings on the operational costs shown in the above table. At the administrative level additional savings will be made in relation to staff time spent:

- coordinating the series;
- relocating reports from the 'local' (*see 6.3 iii) a*) storage area to the Parliamentary Papers storage area;
- maintaining separate indexing systems:
  - Miscellaneous papers index;
  - Parliamentary Papers index;

- Index to Papers Presented to Parliament; and
- Green List (daily papers list); and
- on Publications Committee administration.

It is noted that in the event of the series being discontinued the Parliament will still receive and maintain additional copies of all papers tabled and would make them available as a last resort for researchers. House of Representatives standing order No. 39 provides that the Clerk maintain custody of all documents laid before the House and standing order No. 320 stipulates that all papers and documents presented to the House shall be considered public and provides for permission to be given for the papers and documents to be made available for inspection.

## 6. Other systems in place for the dissemination of Commonwealth Publications

### 6.1 *AGPS Library Deposit and Free Issue Schemes*

The 1964 report of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications (the Erwin Committee) recommended the deposit of Commonwealth publications in selected Australian libraries. The implementation of this recommendation resulted in the operation of two schemes:

- the **deposit scheme** to the National Library of Australia and State reference libraries, which commenced in 1970; and
- the **free issue scheme** to university libraries, which commenced in 1974.

These schemes provide for collections of Commonwealth government publications which are freely available to library users.

In addition to these schemes the AGPS compiles the *Commonwealth publications official list*. This is a fortnightly list of all AGPS publishing activities which is distributed to over 2700 libraries and educational institutions.

These schemes encompass not only those reports which are ordered to be printed by both Houses and subsequently become part of the PPS but also all those reports presented to Parliament but which do not fall into the Parliamentary Papers Series category ie. they are not “ordered to be printed”.

### 6.2 *Commonwealth Parliamentary Library arrangement with State Parliamentary Libraries*

Twenty-one copies of all government reports tabled in Parliament are supplied to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library on the day of tabling. From these twenty-one copies the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library sends 1 of each report to each of the State, Northern Territory and New Zealand Parliamentary Libraries.

This arrangement encompasses not only those reports which are ordered to be printed by both Houses and subsequently become part of the PPS but also all those reports presented to Parliament but which do not become part of the Parliamentary Papers Series.

### 6.3 Comparison to Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS)

The two systems described above are currently running parallel to the PPS and to a large degree duplicate distribution of the documents in question (*see attachment C*).

#### i) Advantages of the AGPS schemes and the Parliamentary Library arrangements:

- a) **more timely dissemination** - The PPS is distributed on an ongoing basis, however, due to parliamentary and administrative procedures which must take place in relation to the series there is a delay of 6 to 8 months, sometimes longer, between the time the reports are presented to Parliament and the recipients receiving them in volume or blister pack form - the AGPS schemes and the Parliamentary Library arrangements supply the reports to the recipients very shortly after the report has been printed and/or after its presentation to Parliament.
- b) **more comprehensive collection of publications** - The PPS includes only those reports tabled in Parliament and subsequently ordered to be printed by the Parliament - the AGPS schemes include PPS category reports as well as all other reports printed by the AGPS many of which are not tabled in Parliament or not ordered to be printed - the Parliamentary Library arrangements include all reports tabled in Parliament regardless of whether they are subsequently ordered to be printed.
- c) **no need to maintain expensive storage areas and storage procedures** - The physical storage of the reports for inclusion in the PPS is an ongoing expense. It is many months between reports being printed and subsequently being included in a PPS volume, if bound, and despatched to recipients. AGPS incurs the cost not only of the storage space itself but also the administrative costs associated with it. There are no such storage problems with the other AGPS schemes as the reports are disseminated in an ongoing and timely fashion, not requiring the long term large storage space nor the administrative structure associated with it.

#### ii) Problems of AGPS schemes and the Parliamentary Library arrangements:

- a) **lack of identification and indexing system** - The PPS brings with it the benefit of an identification system ie, the parliamentary paper number, the series is indexed and contains a table of contents - neither the AGPS schemes nor the Parliamentary Library arrangements include these components.
- b) **no compulsion on agencies to publish with the AGPS** - Approximately 30% of reports presented to Parliament are not printed at the AGPS. The PPS captures these by means of compulsion on the agencies to supply copies of reports not only for tabling but also for inclusion in the PPS - without this compulsion at present the AGPS do not have any guarantee of access to these publications for inclusion in the Library Deposit and Free Issue Schemes and this in itself can create difficulties with some bodies.

#### iii) Possible solutions to identified problems:

- a) **lack of identification and indexing system** - Both House departments currently maintain separate 'local' numbered identification systems for all papers and reports tabled in Parliament.

Upon a report being ordered to be printed by either House a DHR officer allocates the report with another number, the Parliamentary Paper number. This number is recorded in the *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament* (see attachment D). This index lists all papers tabled in both Houses of Parliament with a reference to the corresponding *Votes and Proceedings* and/or *Journals of the Senate* page number. The index is disseminated widely throughout Australian State, municipal and educational libraries, reaching all current PPS and Library Deposit Scheme recipients, *Votes and Proceedings* and *Journals of the Senate* recipients as well as a wide range of government and non-government agencies and institutions. There are currently plans to make the *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament* available in electronic form via the ParlInfo/internet system.

All those papers and reports not ordered to be printed retain the original 'local' identification numbers and are recorded on departmental registers which can only be accessed by officers within each of the Chamber Table Offices.

In the event of the PPS being abolished the original 'local' identification numbers could be retained and incorporated in the *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament* replacing the Parliamentary Paper numbers and extending the identification system for all reports tabled in Parliament. This would result in a more comprehensive accessioning system for the papers presented to Parliament.

Indeed, the electronic indexing program currently used to generate the *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament* could be enhanced to allocate unique identification numbers to reports tabled in one or both Houses.

Administratively it would eliminate the need for relocation of reports from the 'local' storage area to the PPS storage area and the need to maintain a number of separate indexing systems.

- b) **no compulsion on agencies to publish with the AGPS** - Although Government departments and statutory bodies should not be compelled to publish their reports through the AGPS, the DHR feels it would be reasonable to compel them to make their reports widely available to the public via an official dissemination process. This may be achieved by:

- the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet sending instructions to all appropriate bodies directing them to either supply sufficient quantities of their reports to the AGPS or another central coordinating agency for dissemination or by directing them to disseminate their reports to relevant recipients themselves; or
- the Houses of Parliament expressing the view (possibly even in the form of a legislative provision) that all authoring bodies' annual reports are to be made available for public distribution in such manner as is seen fit by the Parliament eg. either by supplying sufficient quantities of their reports to the AGPS or another central coordinating agency for dissemination or by disseminating their reports to relevant recipients themselves. New South

Wales currently has two Acts of Parliament where this requirement exists. They are:

- *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985*

**Public availability of annual reports**

14. A Department Head shall, as soon as practicable after the Department's annual report has been laid, or is deemed to have been laid, before both Houses of Parliament in accordance with section 13, make copies of the report available for public sale or distribution in such manner or at such place or places as may be prescribed.

The regulations prescribe:

**12. Public availability of annual reports**

(1) A Department Head must keep, at the office of the Department, sufficient copies of its annual report in order to meet normal public demand.

(2) A Department Head must, if required by the Treasurer to do so, furnish copies of its annual report to the New South Wales Government Information Service, and to such other persons or organisations as may be specified by the Treasurer, for purchase by the public at a price per copy not greater than the direct cost of production per copy.

- *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984*

**Public availability of annual reports**

12. A statutory body shall, as soon as practicable after its annual report has been laid, or is deemed to have been laid, before both Houses of Parliament in accordance with section 11, make copies of the report available for public sale or distribution in such manner or at such place or places as may be prescribed.

The regulations prescribe:

**18. Public availability of annual reports**

(1) A statutory body must keep, at the office of the body, sufficient copies of its annual report in order to meet normal public demand.

(2) A statutory body must, if required by the Treasurer to do so, furnish copies of its annual report to the New South Wales Government Information Service, or to such person or persons as may be specified by the Treasurer, for purchase by the public at a price per copy not greater than the direct cost of production per copy.

## **7. General Statements**

### **7.1 AGPS**

Information given by Mr Godfrey, Deputy Secretary, Department of Administrative Services, to the Senate Estimates Committee on 30 September 1996 revealed that his department had "gone out to the market for a request for interest..." and that it was expected "that a tender will be out in the market fairly shortly depending upon the response ...from the request for information."

In responding to a question from Senator Bishop relating to the continuing role of AGPS in relation to the provision of information to the public, Mr Godfrey went on to say "Yes, that will have a continuing role and we will continue to provide information to the public and will continue to provide information to libraries around Australia so the public have access to that information."

However, in an explanation to the committee on the tendering process Mr Godfrey stated "The process will then be that we will assess the operations as a result of the tender to determine what should be the future operation of AGPS in terms of its role and also a timing issue on when we should make all the changes to the role."

This matter is important in respect of the dissemination and coordination of, in this case, the PPS. It appears clear that AGPS' role in relation to the provision of information to libraries around Australia may well be affected following the assessment of operations resulting from the tender process.

## **7.2 *Alternative technologies***

The continuance of the PPS has been examined by the Joint Committee on Publications (JCP) in 1977 and 1986. The 1977 Committee acknowledged submissions calling for the series to be produced in alternative forms to hard copy which would enable savings in space and easier referral. On both occasions the JCP saw merit in continuing the series in hard copy form mainly because the suitable alternatives (eg microform, CD ROM) were not well developed or widespread.

It is possible that microform and CD ROM and other technologies (eg Internet) are now sufficiently advanced to warrant further examination as viable alternatives to hard copy in these matters. It is noted that AGPS is endeavouring to produce a CD ROM containing annual reports of executive and parliamentary departments and major statutory authorities, and a growing number of government organisations are placing more information, including annual reports, on the Internet.

Some recipients of the PPS have indicated to the DHR that they would prefer to have electronic access to the material. However, while alternative technologies may increasingly be used to provide alternative sources of some of the documents which currently constitute the PPS, the DHR is aware that the abolition of the series will mean that there will no longer be a single numbered collection of the major documents tabled in Parliament, and this is a separate matter from the form in which the documents are issued. This could of course be overcome by the proposal at 6.3 iii) a).

## **8. Conclusions**

Although the PPS retains some value for the dissemination of information and for researchers, considerable cost savings, both to the Parliament and author bodies, would be achieved if the series was discontinued, and the duplication mentioned would be eliminated. Demand for additional copies of tabled papers (eg for the Library Deposit and Free Issue schemes) could be accommodated by including such requirements in tabling quantities or by AGPS or another central coordinating agency obtaining the copies separately from authors.



It is likely that there could be concern on the part of some recipients if the series was to be discontinued. It is also likely that not all documents presently included in the series would be available from author agencies. Nevertheless, substantial sums are involved in maintaining the series, the House departments' budgets are under severe pressure, and while the series has been useful in disseminating information widely, much of it has been executive, not parliamentary information.

If the series is discontinued, the DHR will ensure that adequate distribution of House of Representatives committee reports and other significant parliamentary publications for which it is responsible will be maintained, but the onus to ensure any further distribution of executive information will then be with the executive government.

In short, while the continuation of the PPS may be regarded by some as desirable, it cannot be seen as essential.

The Department would be happy to provide any additional information the committee may require.

**BOUND VOLUME DISTRIBUTION 1996**

- House of Representatives
- Senate
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Library

**Recipients to receive blister packs as per Speaker's approval:**

- NSW Parliamentary Library
- Vic. Parliamentary Library
- Qld Parliamentary Library
- SA Parliamentary Library
- WA Parliamentary Library
- Tas. Parliamentary Library
- National Library of Australia (2 sets)
- State Library of NSW
- State Library of Victoria
- State Library of Queensland
- State Library of South Australia
- Library Board of Western Australia
- State Library of Tasmania
- Northern Territory Library
- Australian Archives
- Canadian Parliamentary Library
- Library of Congress (USA)
- National Diet Library (Japan)
- New Zealand Parliamentary Library

**BLISTER PACK DISTRIBUTION 1996**

**ACT:**

- Menzies Library -ANU
- University of Canberra Library

**Northern Territory:**

**NSW:**

- Fisher Library - Sydney University
- Dixon Library - University of New England
- Menzies Library - University of NSW
- Auchmunty Library - University of Newcastle
- Macquarie University Library
- University of Wollongong Library
- NSW Institute of Technology Library
- William Merryles Library - Charles Sturt University

**Victoria:**

- Baillieu Library - University of Melbourne
- La Trobe University Library
- Monash University Library (Main campus)
- Monash University Library (Gippsland campus)
- Deakin University Library

**Queensland:**

- University of Queensland Library
- Griffith University Library
- James Cook University Library
- Queensland University of Technology Library
- Central Queensland University Library

**Tasmania:**

- Morris Miller Library - University of Tasmania

**South Australia:**

- Barr Smith Library - University of Adelaide
- Flinders University Library

**Western Australia:**

- University of Western Australia Library
- Murdoch University Library
- Curtin University of Technology Library
- Edith Cowan University Library

## DISSEMINATION OF COMMONWEALTH PUBLICATIONS

RECEIVER	PP Series	AGPS schemes and Parliamentary Library arrangement
<b>ACT:</b>		
Commonwealth Parliamentary Library	✓	✓
House of Representatives	✓	X
Senate	✓	X
National Library of Australia	✓	✓
Australian Archives	✓	X
Menzies Library - ANU	✓	✓
University of Canberra Library	✓	✓
<b>NSW:</b>		
Fisher Library - Sydney University	✓	✓
Dixson Library - University of New England	✓	✓
Menzies Library - University of NSW	✓	✓
Auchmuty Library - University of Newcastle	✓	✓
Macquarie University Library	✓	✓
University of Wollongong Library	✓	✓
NSW Institute of Technology Library	✓	✓
William Merryles Library - Charles Sturt University	✓	✓
State Library of NSW	✓	✓
University of Western Sydney	X	✓
NSW Parliamentary Library	✓	✓
<b>Victoria:</b>		
Baillieu Library - University of Melbourne	✓	✓
La Trobe University Library	✓	✓
Monash University Library (Main campus)	✓	✓
Monash University Library (Gippsland campus)	✓	X
Deakin University Library	✓	✓
State Library of Victoria	✓	✓
Victoria University of Technology	X	✓
Swinburne University of Technology	X	✓
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	X	✓
Victorian Parliamentary Library	✓	✓
<b>Queensland:</b>		
University of Queensland Library	✓	✓

RECEIVER	PP Series	AGPS schemes and Parliamentary Library arrangement
Griffith University Library	✓	✓
James Cook University Library	✓	✓
Queensland University of Technology Library	✓	✓
Central Queensland University Library	✓	✓
State Library of Queensland	✓	✓
University of Southern Queensland	X	✓
Queensland Parliamentary Library	✓	✓
<b>Tasmania:</b>		
Morris Miller Library - University of Tasmania	✓	✓
State Library of Tasmania	✓	✓
Tasmanian Parliamentary Library	✓	✓
<b>South Australia:</b>		
Barr Smith Library - University of Adelaide	✓	✓
Flinders University Library	✓	✓
SA Parliamentary Library	✓	✓
State Library of South Australia	✓	✓
<b>Northern Territory:</b>		
Northern Territory Library	✓	✓
Northern Territory University	X	✓
<b>Western Australia:</b>		
University of Western Australia Library	✓	✓
Murdoch University Library	✓	✓
Curtin University of Technology Library	✓	✓
Edith Cowan University Library	✓	✓
WA Parliamentary Library	✓	✓
Library Board of Western Australia	✓	✓
<b>Overseas:</b>		
Canadian Parliamentary Library	✓	X
Library of Congress (USA)	✓	X
National Diet Library (Japan)	✓	X
New Zealand Parliamentary Library	✓	✓

Paper	Presented		Printed	
	Journals Page	V. & P. Page	Year	Paper No.
interjection during question time, 15 November 1990—Copy of letter from Mr R. Atkinson, MP, to Mr Hawke, Prime Minister, dated 22 November 1990	..	415		
International Air Services Commission Act—Instrument under section 54—22 July 1992	2700	1675		
20 August 1992	2717	1680		
Policy statement amendment No. 1	3304	1964		
Policy statement under section 11, 1 July 1992	2653	1641		
Regulations—Statutory Rules—1992—No. 233	2653	1641		
International Air Services Commission Bill 1992—Second reading speech	2438	..		
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (General Capital Increase) Act—Report for—1988-89	50	36	1990	24
1989-90	501	394	1990	272
1990-91	1967	1269	1991	407
1991-92	3126	1910	1992	267
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Opened for signature at New York on 7 March 1966—United Nation Treaty Series 1969—No. 9464	..	1914		
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—Treaty—Text of—(First) Optional Protocol to the Covenant	1734	1213		
International exhibitions—Amendments of 31 May 1988 to Convention relating to international exhibitions, as amended	90	82		
International Labour Organisation—Convention No. 87: Freedom of association and protection of the right to organise, 1948—Direct request 1991—Australia	1497	..		
International Labour Conference—Australian delegation report—76th session, 1989	74	61		
77th session, 1990	585	436		
78th session, 1991	2939	1797		
76th session, 1989—Convention No. 169—Indigenous and tribal peoples—A position paper by Minister for Industrial Relations	517	416		
77th session, 1990—Conventions—No. 170—Safety in the use of chemicals at work	1952	1302		
No. 171—Night work	1952	1302		
Protocol of 1990 to the Night Work (Women) Convention (revised), 1948	1952	1302		
Recommendations—No. 177—Safety in the use of chemicals at work	1952	1302		
No. 178—Night work	1952	1302		
Statement by the Minister for Industrial Relations relating to instruments adopted by the Conference 78th session, 1991—	1952	1302		
Convention 172—Working conditions in hotels, restaurants and similar establishments	2939	1797		
Recommendation 179—Working conditions in hotels, restaurants and similar establishments	2939	1797		
Statement by Senator Cook, Minister for Industrial Relations	2939	1797		
Treaties—ILO Convention (No. 38) Fixing the Minimum Age for the Admission of Children to Employment at Sea	2971	1847		
ILO Convention (No. 92) concerning Crew Accommodation on Board Ship	2971	1847		
ILO Convention (No. 133) concerning Crew Accommodation on Board Ship (supplementary provisions)	2972	1847		
ILO Convention (No. 156) concerning equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women workers: workers with family responsibilities	90	82		
And see "Vocational rehabilitation and employment (Disabled persons"				
International Maritime Satellite Organization—Amendments of 19 January 1989 to convention on International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT), and Operating Agreement	90	82		
International Monetary Agreements Act—Report on operations of Act, for—1989-90	501	394	1990	273
1990-91	1967	1269	1991	408
1991-92	3126	1910	1992	268
International Monetary Fund—Treaty—Text of—Third amendment of the Articles of the International Monetary Fund	1734	1213		

# Joint Committee on Publications

## Inquiry into the Proposed Discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series

Supplementary Submissions/Additional Information Requested by  
Committee

No. 52A

Response from: LM Barlin, Clerk of the House,  
House of Representatives, Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT

Received on: 24 April 1997



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
TEL: (06) 277 4111  
FAX: (06) 277 2006

OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

22 April 1997

Mr Terry Brown  
Secretary  
Joint Committee on Publications  
Suite SG 25  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2600

Dear Mr Brown

**Proposed discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series**

As requested by the Committee at its hearing on 10 February 1997, I submit further information on the proposed discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series for the consideration of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'L M Barlin'.

L M BARLIN  
Clerk of the House



## INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED DISCONTINUATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

### FURTHER SUBMISSION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

During the course of the public hearing by the Joint Committee on Publications on the proposed discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS) on 10 February 1997 representatives of the House of Representatives Department undertook to provide additional information to the committee. The information sought is set out hereunder.

#### 1 Legal aspects

The first matter the committee requested officers to address was the legal implications of the proposal contained in the Department's submission especially as they related to copyright and privilege.

##### *Copyright*

The proposal put forward by the Department does not affect copyright.

Copyright in documents prepared by, or under the direction or control of, the Commonwealth is vested in the Crown in right of the Commonwealth. Copyright in a document such as an annual report includes the exclusive right to reproduce the work.

Copyright is administered by AGPS on behalf of the Commonwealth. The Copyright Act does not affect the powers, privileges and immunities of either House of the Parliament.

##### *Application of parliamentary privilege*

The Parliamentary Papers Act provides that either House may authorise the publication of any document laid before it. Secondly, it provides that when either House orders a document to be printed that House shall be deemed to have authorised the Government Printer to publish the document. Technically, this action confers the protection of parliamentary privilege on the distribution of such documents as parliamentary papers. If the parliamentary paper series were to be abolished the second provision would not have any application and the documents would not attract privilege unless

- the House authorises publication of a particular document thereby conferring the protection of parliamentary privilege on the publication of that paper (eg audit reports); or
- it is presented to the Senate where under Senate standing order 167, the publication of any paper tabled in the Senate is protected.

It is considered therefore that, for practical purposes, abolition of the series would not present any problems in terms of privilege.

The publication of tabled papers was considered by the House of Representatives Procedure Committee in 1988. That committee recommended that standing order 320 of the House should be reworded to remove possible ambiguities but "with respect to those papers not authorised for publication nor ordered to be printed, access to non Members be subjected to the discretion of the Speaker (subject to any direction of the House) where it is considered they may contain actionable material" (PP 268 (1988) 6). The suggested standing order to be substituted was as follows:

**Papers and documents presented to the House and not authorised for publication or ordered to be printed may be made available to Members and, with the permission of the Speaker, may be inspected by other persons or copies thereof or extracts therefrom may be made.**

No government response to this recommendation has been received. In its review of its reports in 1996 the Procedure Committee endorsed the recommendation which it had made in 1988 and requested the government to respond to it. In originally reaching its conclusions the Procedure Committee observed that "Unrestricted publication with absolute immunity carries with it the risk of damage to individuals and groups by repeated and malicious publication beyond the parliamentary sphere, and this risk is considered to outweigh the benefits of unrestricted publication of the documents in question" (PP 262 (1988) 5). The committee had been prompted to conduct this inquiry by a letter from the Speaker which referred, in particular, to the differing practices of the Senate contained currently in Senate standing order 167. That standing order states "The publication of each document laid on the table of the Senate is authorised by this standing order".

The committee also made reference to the 1984 report of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Privilege. In that report the matter of protection to persons other than officers of the Parliament providing papers to persons other than Members was canvassed. The Joint Committee did not believe that the protection of absolute privilege and hence immunity should be extended to apply to other persons publishing tabled documents "beyond the borders of what we regard to be fundamentally necessary for the workings of the Parliament" (PP 219 (1984) 62). This principle was later enacted as section 11 of the Parliamentary Privileges Act.

The Procedure Committee then went on to conclude "that the current arrangements should be retained and that a positive action by the House should be required if it is proposed to authorise full publication of any paper thought to contain actionable material" (PP 262 (1988) 4).

In summary, it is considered that the proposition put forward by this Department to abolish the Parliamentary Papers series does not have any legal impact on either copyright or parliamentary privilege.

## 2 Electronic indexing

The committee requested the cost of more immediate indexing be looked at and raised the question of possible automation of the *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament*.

The *Index to the Papers Presented to Parliament* is compiled with the assistance of the Parliamentary Papers Database which is currently updated daily. The data input is shared between officers of the two House departments. To form the Index, the database is downloaded to a word processing document three times a year, edited for style and format, and then produced in hard copy form for dissemination throughout Australia and overseas. There is scope for the downloading to occur on a more regular basis and this will be pursued. However, having regard to cost considerations, this may not be as frequent as some would prefer.

The Index is published on the House of Representatives Intranet as part of the ParlInfo database. It is envisaged that at some time in the future the Index will become available to Internet users along with other parliamentary information.

## 3 Systems used by other Parliaments

### *New South Wales*

All reports ordered to be printed by either House of the N.S.W. Parliament are distributed as Parliamentary Papers, under contract, by Styfox Pty Ltd.

Authoring bodies, when supplying copies of a report for tabling, also supply the appropriate number of copies required for Parliamentary Paper distribution either directly to Styfox Pty Ltd or to the Parliament which then forwards the copies to Styfox Pty Ltd.

There are some instances where authoring bodies fail to supply the appropriate number of copies required for Parliamentary Paper distribution. In these cases Styfox Pty Ltd contact the author body and request the additional copies. Should this method fail, the Parliament makes as many photocopies of the original tabled report as are required and forwards them to Styfox Pty Ltd for binding and/or distribution.

There are approximately 360 reports per session (generally a 12 month period) included in the series which is distributed to approximately 42 recipients in pamphlet, bound or microfiche format. The recipient list consists mainly of Australian national, State, Parliamentary and tertiary institution libraries. The series is not numbered, however, an index is prepared at the end of each session and sent to all recipients.

State and Parliamentary libraries receive the series free of charge via reciprocal arrangements with the Parliament; and all other recipients pay a subscription fee of \$450-\$500 per year.

As prescribed by the *Annual Reports (Departments) Regulations* and the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Regulations* authoring bodies also supply Parliament with annual reports in computer readable format.

Each House retains a stock of 10 copies of each tabled report, specifically for the use of Members, for a period of two parliaments, after which time any remaining stock is discarded.

### *Victoria*

Reports ordered to be printed by either House of the Victorian Parliament form the Parliamentary Papers Series.

At the end of each calendar year 17 sets of the series are bound and 19 sets are collated ready for binding (36 sets in total). The sets are then distributed to Australian national, State, Parliamentary and tertiary institution libraries free of charge.

### *Queensland*

Following recommendations made by the Legislative Assembly of Queensland Printing Committee in 1993 (see attachment 'A') the only papers included in the Parliamentary Papers Series are reports of the Auditor-General, Ombudsman, parliamentary and ad hoc committees of inquiry and royal commissions which are presented to Parliament.

The Parliamentary Papers Series is disseminated, free of charge via the Government Printer, to a list of recipients nominated by the Printing Committee. The list consists mainly of Australian national, State, Parliamentary and tertiary institution libraries.

Reports of departments and statutory instrumentalities are not included in the Parliamentary Papers Series and those bodies are responsible for the dissemination of their annual reports to places of free access, ie, libraries and tertiary institutions.

### *South Australia*

There is no dissemination carried out of those reports ordered to be printed by the S.A. Parliament.

Individual author bodies are responsible for the dissemination of the publications they have tabled in Parliament.

Organisations or individuals wishing to obtain a copy of any paper tabled in Parliament must apply to the author body for a copy of the paper.

### *Western Australia*

It is mostly the case that individual author bodies supply the W.A. Parliament only with the minimum number of reports required for tabling.

The only form of dissemination for these reports by Parliament is an ad hoc supply to individuals on request and then only if the author body has supplied Parliament with stock over and above the tabling requirement. Organisations or individuals wishing to obtain a copy of any paper tabled in Parliament, and not available from Parliament, must apply to the author body for a copy of the paper.

Individual author bodies are responsible for the dissemination of the publications they have tabled in Parliament.

### *Tasmania*

Up until 1996 any paper ordered to be printed by the Tasmanian Parliament was printed in pamphlet form and disseminated to Australian national, State, Parliamentary and tertiary institution libraries by the Parliament.

It was determined by the Presiding Officers in 1996 (see attachment 'B') that from 28 May 1996 Parliament would be responsible for the printing and dissemination of only those reports emanating from the standing and select committees of the Parliament. Therefore, the Parliamentary Papers Series now contains only those reports authored by the Parliament.

The series is disseminated to Australian national, State, Parliamentary and tertiary institution libraries in pamphlet form. One set of Parliamentary Papers is bound each year and retained by the Parliament.

Where any paper, other than reports of standing and select committees of the Parliament, is printed as a Parliamentary Paper the resultant cost of the printing and dissemination is the responsibility of the author department or agency concerned. This has resulted in a system whereby bodies or individuals wishing to receive such a report must apply to each author body on an individual basis.

### *Northern Territory*

Currently the N.T. Parliament pays for the printing and distribution of all papers ordered to be printed (approx. 110 reports per year). These papers are distributed in pamphlet form to approximately 30 recipients, including Australian national, State, State departmental, Parliamentary and tertiary institution libraries.

The Publications Committee is currently considering a proposal for a system whereby the Parliament is responsible for the printing and dissemination of Auditor-General's reports and Parliamentary committee reports only.

Should this proposal be adopted, individual author bodies would be responsible for the dissemination of the publications they have tabled in Parliament and organisations or individuals wishing to obtain a copy of such a report would apply to the author body for a copy of the report.

### *Australian Capital Territory*

The A.C.T. Parliament does not disseminate papers ordered to be printed. Copies of any report tabled in Parliament are made available to individuals via the Legislative Assembly Shop Front.

Individuals and organisations that apply to Parliament for a copy of a report presented to Parliament are referred to either the shop front or the author body.

### *New Zealand*

The N.Z. Parliament's Parliamentary Papers Series consists of 2 categories of papers:

- a) those produced by the Parliament or the Parliamentary Counsel (bills, statutes, regulations, acts, order papers, notice papers, committee reports etc); and
- b) those produced by another reporting entity (reports of government departments and agencies).

Category a) papers are printed under the parliamentary printing contract with GP Print - the former Government Printer now privatised.

There is a "free list" administered by GP Print, however, this free list includes only category a) documents which are supplied to recipients in pamphlet form (not bound). The free list recipients consist of 21 depository libraries, 7 university libraries, other Commonwealth Parliamentary libraries (State and Federal in Australia and Canada) and all Pacific Commonwealth countries.

Category b) papers are printed by, and at the expense of, the reporting entity. These papers are almost completely deregulated except that they must be of standard size as they are bound as an appendix to the Journals. Each of these papers is given a unique parliamentary paper identifier. The reporting entity is responsible for the distribution of its report either directly to recipients (free of cost or with a charge) or through book stores. The reports are made available for sale through Bennetts book stores, a division of Whitcoulls Publishing House and Booksellers. Whitcoulls is owned by the same company that owns GP Print.

All Parliamentary Papers (categories a) and b)) are bound as an appendix to the Journals on a yearly basis.

#### *Canada - House of Commons*

Papers tabled in the Canadian House of Commons are numbered and sub-divided according to the *type* of document and organised sequentially according to the date of tabling on a sessional basis. The papers consist of reports tabled pursuant to: statute, eg annual reports of Crown Corporations; and standing orders, eg Government responses to committee reports.

Parliamentary papers are not printed and disseminated. Any individual or body who wishes to obtain a copy of a paper tabled in Parliament is encouraged to obtain it from a source other than Parliament. However, if a "client" is supplied, by Parliament, with a copy on request they are charged at a rate of 25 cents per page.

There are no guidelines on who can receive parliamentary papers. Any person or body wishing to obtain a copy of a paper tabled is, for the cost of reproduction, able to do so.

The community learns of papers tabled in Parliament via the Journals, Hansard, newspaper accounts or lobby group newsletters.

#### *United Kingdom - House of Commons*

Both Houses of Parliament produce their own series of papers: House of Commons papers (HC series); and House of Lords papers (HL series).

The HC series is compiled on a sessional basis and consists of papers which arise out of the deliberations of the House and its committees or are needed for its work and certain annual and other reports required by statute to be laid before the House.

Apart from the supply of papers to deposit (or 'copyright') libraries as a statutory requirement, the series is available only by purchase.

Since the privatisation of Her Majesty's Stationery Office on 30 September 1996, Stationery Office Ltd carries out the printing and publishing of the series under contract.

The series is published in paper form as individual volumes and not in sessional sets. Those interested in compiling the series into sets make their own arrangements to do so. Titles and contents pages are prepared by officers of the House for inclusion in their own volumes. These pages are published by Stationery Office Ltd and made available for sale to the public.

The Stationery Office Ltd provides an extensive publication and bibliographic service which allows for wide dissemination of information about the series. All publications are offered for sale on a fixed price scale where the price of a volume is determined by the number of pages.

Chadwyck-Healy, a private publisher, also make the series available for sale in microfiche form. A limited number of select committee reports, which also form part of the series, is available in electronic form on the Internet.

The HL series is compiled on a sessional basis and consists mainly of Select Committee reports and occasional papers such as special reports on the progress of individual bills.

Apart from the supply of papers to deposit (or 'copyright') libraries as a statutory requirement, the series is available only by purchase.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF QUEENSLAND

## PRINTING COMMITTEE

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### REPORT ON REVIEW OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES

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Laid on the Table of the House  
[..date..] 1993



## ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE:

Standing Order No. 300 of the Legislative Assembly reads:

"300. At the commencement of every Parliament there shall be appointed a Committee of seven Members, to be called the Printing Committee, to assist Mr Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing to be executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing Petitions, Returns, and other papers and the monitoring of the tabling of reports and the functions of such Committee shall not cease until their successors are appointed. Four Members shall form a quorum. A vacancy in the Committee shall be filled whenever Parliament is apprised thereof."

.. :

## INTRODUCTION

In the past, the Parliamentary Papers series has been one of the major reference sources for information on and research into the role and activities of Parliament and government for Members of Parliament and the general public. In response to the request for 'open government', the government now supplies information on a more regular basis to the electorate through the Parliament and widely distributes reports to interested organisations. This has meant that the Parliamentary Papers series, being a series containing the principal papers presented to Parliament, has grown enormously over the past few years.

## BACKGROUND

1. In line with other cost efficiency measures currently being implemented within the Parliament, the Committee has been reviewing the cost and distribution of the parliamentary papers series. The Committee has become concerned at the increasing cost of the series and the burgeoning number of papers now included in the series.
2. At present, Government departments are required by statute to table their annual reports in the Parliament and, in most instances, these reports are ordered to be printed. Additionally, some reports of government instrumentalities and statutory bodies when tabled also become part of the parliamentary papers series.
3. In the past, there have been no guidelines to determine whether a report should be

Included in the series. This has led to a rather inconsistent approach which was largely determined by what had been the past practice rather than the usefulness or the need to include the report in the series. On occasions, the need to ensure that a report was covered by parliamentary privilege had been a factor.

4. Following the enactment of the Parliamentary Papers Act, all documents tabled in the Parliament, whether printed or not, now attract parliamentary privilege.
5. Since 1991, 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, the number of ad hoc committees of inquiry has expanded. This increase has added significantly to the cost of producing the series.

For the past five sessions, the number of volumes produced and the cost involved is detailed below:

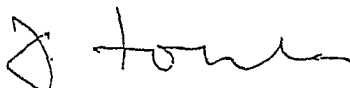
<u>SESSION</u>	<u>RECIPIENTS</u>	<u>VOLUMES</u>	<u>COST</u>
1987-88	76	6	\$59,388.00
1988-89	83	5	\$45,941.00
1989-90	82	3	\$29,735.00
1990-91	81	12	\$71,479.00
1991-92	55	15	\$68,797.00

6. Presently, for those reports that are ordered to be printed, departments and statutory bodies are required to supply 305 copies to the Parliament for distribution, and for inclusion in the Parliamentary Papers series.
7. The Committee is aware that many government authorities now widely circulate their reports and often these reports are distributed to the same people, ie libraries and tertiary institutions, who receive the Parliamentary Papers series.
8. In an endeavour to reduce costs and avoid duplication in the distribution of tabled reports, the Committee proposes that the annual reports of government departments and statutory authorities should not, in future, be included in the series.
9. The Committee believes that substantial cost savings will result from reducing the number of volumes required to be produced and by reducing the number of copies of reports to be supplied to the Parliament.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In making its recommendations, the Committee has adopted the following publication guidelines for the Parliamentary Papers series -

- (a) That all reports of the Auditor-General, Ombudsman, parliamentary and ad hoc committees of inquiry and royal commissions which are presented to Parliament be recommended for printing and included in the Parliamentary Papers series.
- (b) Departments and statutory instrumentalities be responsible for distributing their annual reports to places of free access, ie libraries and tertiary institutions.
- (c) The Bills and Papers Office should continue to be responsible for distributing tabled reports to Members within Parliament House.
- (d) That where a report is to be tabled in Parliament, *and a full parliamentary distribution is required*, 130 copies be provided to the Bills and Papers Office. This also applies to all reports specified in paragraph (a).
- (e) That in all other circumstances, a minimum of 3 copies of each report to be tabled in the Parliament be provided to the Bills and Papers Office.



**J FOURAS MLA**

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Chairman of the Printing Committee



4 June, 1996

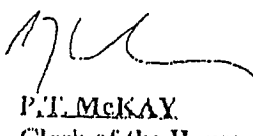
Mr G.G. Priestley  
Chief Executive Officer  
Printing Authority of Tasmania  
2 Salamanca Place  
HOBART 7000

PRINTING OF PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS AND PAPERS

This memorandum serves to confirm that the cost of printing reports of all standing and select committees of the Parliament, as Parliamentary Papers will continue to be met by the Legislature General.

The Presiding Officers have, however, determined that where any other paper is printed as a Parliamentary Paper, then the resultant cost is the responsibility of the Department or Agency concerned, with effect on and from 28 May 1996.

  
R.J.S. MCKENZIE  
Clerk of the Council

  
P.T. MCKAY  
Clerk of the House



(1) Copies of H.M.C.C. volumes.

(2) Exchange copies for Library.

4 June, 1996

The Premier of Tasmania  
The Hon. A.M. Rundle MHA  
11th Floor  
Executive Building  
15 Murray Street  
HOBART 7000

Dear Mr Premier

#### TABLING AND PRINTING OF REPORTS

The cost of printing annual and special reports to the Parliament as parliamentary papers for the 1995 sitting year was of the order of \$54,312. The reports were printed after motions were carried in the Assembly following their being moved by the responsible Minister. A breakdown of expenditure for the 1995 sitting year is at Attachment 'A'.

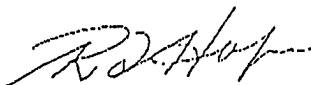
Both Houses have sought to contain and where possible reduce, running costs and improve operational efficiency. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Parliamentary Printing area where the Votes and Proceedings and Notice Papers of both Houses are produced "in house". The messages exchanged between the two Houses, production of division lists, telephone lists and directories, Members' Handbooks and even the parchment copies of Address-in-Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech just to name a few, are now printed "in house".

We have determined, therefore, that in the interests of achieving further efficiencies and apportioning printing costs where they clearly belong, and as there is no requirement at law for any reports to the Parliament by agencies of the Crown to be printed as Parliamentary Papers, all such papers and reports so ordered, on the Motion of the appropriate Minister, are henceforth the responsibility of the Department concerned. The Government Business Enterprises Act 1995, requires only that those Enterprises, Authorities or Departments affected, table their reports, not that they be made Parliamentary Papers.

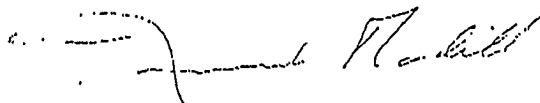
This decision is in harmony with the August 1991 report of the Department of Premier and Cabinet into the "Review of Parliamentary Printing - Parliamentary Papers", paragraph 4.1, a copy of which is Attachment 'B'.

We should be grateful if you would advise your Ministerial colleagues accordingly.

Yours sincerely,



R.T. HOPE  
President



F.L. MADILL  
Speaker



## **APPENDIX 5**

### **SUBMISSIONS FROM THE CLERK OF THE SENATE (SUBMISSIONS 54, 54A)**

# Joint Committee on Publications

## Inquiry into the Proposed Discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series

Correspondence/Submissions Received by Committee

No. 54

Response from:     Harry Evans, Clerk of the Senate  
                          Department of the Senate, CANBERRA, ACT

Received on: 7 February 1997



## **SUBMISSION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED DISCONTINUATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES**

### **1. Summary**

This submission by the Department of the Senate opposes the discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS) at this time. This department, in a joint submission with the Department of the House of Representatives (DHR) to the Presiding Officers in June 1996, supported in principle a proposal to discontinue the PPS. At the time the department had reservations about this course of action as there was no comprehensive alternative to the series. However, the department agreed to proceed with the submission as the DHR was facing substantial budget and staffing cuts.

The department remains of the view that eventually the printed PPS should be able to be discontinued, but this should not occur until there is a guaranteed alternative means of providing the documents that comprise the series to recipients.

### **2. Purpose of the Parliamentary Papers Series**

Parliamentary papers are documents that have been presented to either House and which either House has ordered to be printed. These include annual reports of departments and statutory authorities, parliamentary committee reports, Auditor General reports, and reports of royal commissions and special inquiries, etc. At the time of printing the relevant report for tabling, an additional quantity should also be printed by the author body, in anticipation of the report being ordered to be printed as a parliamentary paper.

In 1964 the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications expressed the view in its report that, by ordering a document to be printed as a parliamentary paper, Parliament was fulfilling two purposes:

- that adequate copies of a document are available so that persons who wish to have a copy may do so;
- that a document is available to be bound into indexed volumes and preserved in a convenient and accessible form as a permanent record.

In order to achieve these purposes, copies of parliamentary papers are prepared and sold through the Commonwealth Government Bookshops, and a free distribution of the PPS is carried out to ensure that the principal reference libraries and university libraries in each state have a copy of each year's PPS for reference and research purposes.

### 3. Current distributions

Currently, there are three interrelated schemes that distribute free material concerning government and parliament to a variety of recipients—the PPS, the AGPS Library Deposit Scheme (LDS) and the Free Issue Scheme (FIS). The PPS is administered by the departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate (the House departments). The LDS and the FIS are administered by the Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS) as part of its community service obligations.

#### 3.1 *Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS)*

The quantities of reports printed for the PPS are:

280 copies	annual reports and Auditor General reports
320 copies	parliamentary committee reports and reports of royal commissions etc.

All papers in the PPS, no matter by whom they are published, are included in the free distributions carried out under the PPS. There are 83 recipients of pamphlet copies of the PPS (including the LDS/FIS and the Commonwealth Government Bookshops). These recipients of the pamphlet PPS include the National Library, State, parliamentary, some university and a few municipal libraries, public service departments, foreign embassies, political parties and certain overseas libraries. A list of the categories of recipients of the pamphlet PPS is shown at attachment 1. The National Library, State and parliamentary libraries, most university libraries and selected overseas libraries are also provided with blister packs of the PPS ready for binding. The House departments and the Parliamentary Library each receive one bound set of the PPS.

Attachment 2 shows a breakdown of recipients of the PPS together with the form in which or the means by which they receive the PPS (that is, including copies through the LDS/FIS). It is apparent that there is some duplication within the distribution to state libraries, parliamentary libraries and university libraries. The duplication occurs because certain of these libraries receive loose copies through the LDS/FIS and also receive blister packs ready for binding. It is this department's understanding that this duplication enables multiple campus universities to locate a set at each campus. In some cases, a duplicate set enables one set to be used for reference purposes and one set to be available for lending purposes.

It should also be noted that after the free distributions are taken into account, there are 25 remaining copies of the quantities printed for the PPS. The AGPS has advised that in 1996 there were 20 standing orders (that is, equivalent to subscriptions) for all PPS documents, leaving five spare blister pack copies.

Attachment 3 shows details of the free distribution of the PPS to universities and higher education facilities.

### **3.2 AGPS Library Deposit Scheme and Free Issue Scheme (LDS/FIS)**

The LDS/FIS distribute copies of government and parliamentary publications to the National Library, State libraries and most university libraries (a copy of the LDS/FIS brochure appears at attachment 4A and a copy of AGPS information concerning the LDS/FIS extracted from the Internet appears at attachment 4B). It is this department's understanding that, in order for a publication to be distributed via the LDS/FIS, it must be published by AGPS, or the author body may lodge it with the LDS/FIS for distribution pursuant to those schemes.

Although the PPS is not an author body, as part of the free distribution of the PPS, 40 of the 280/320 copies of the pamphlet PPS printed are provided to the LDS/FIS to be distributed pursuant to those schemes.

Thus, if a document that is included in the PPS was originally published by AGPS, it is automatically lodged with the LDS/FIS for distribution pursuant to those schemes. However, if the document was not originally published by AGPS, copies of that document are distributed through the LDS/FIS only because the PPS version has been lodged for distribution. One example of this is Senate committee reports. These are in fact published by the Senate Printing Unit and not AGPS. They are not lodged with the LDS/FIS by Senate committees. The only reason these reports are distributed through the LDS/FIS is that the PPS versions of the reports are lodged with the schemes.

Although there may be some duplication (that is, a document is distributed through LDS/FIS twice, once because it is published by AGPS and once because it is lodged as part of the PPS), this situation does not often arise, as many author bodies now go to outside printers, not AGPS, for their publications, so that the only version lodged with the LDS/FIS is the PPS version.

**Therefore, if the PPS was to be discontinued, those documents in the PPS that are not published by AGPS would not be distributed through the LDS/FIS.**

### **3.3 Summary**

It is nonetheless clear from attachments 2 and 3 that there is some duplication between the various distributions of the PPS documents. The committee may therefore wish to consider reviewing both the guidelines for eligibility for free distribution and the various recipients. Recommendations in relation to these matters are made below at section 6.1.(a).

## **4. Alternative forms of publication and access**

### **4.1 Availability through other means**

It has been suggested that the first purpose of the PPS, of ensuring that there are multiple copies of parliamentary papers available for members of the Parliament and the general public, is no longer relevant, as the majority of documents tabled in Parliament are readily available elsewhere (for example, from the author body) or by means other than printed copies, such as on the Internet. At this time, the Department of the Senate cannot agree with this view.

Certainly some documents may be available elsewhere or by other means. For example, documents may be available through:

- distributions by the author body; or
- printed copies for sale in the Commonwealth Government Bookshops; or
- CD ROM versions for sale in the Commonwealth Government Bookshops; or
- on the Internet.

However, this is not so in the majority of cases. It should also be noted that:

- in these times of cost constraints and cutbacks, distributions by author bodies have been reduced, if not eliminated, thus limiting this type of access;
- many documents are available in the Commonwealth Government Bookshops only because they have been printed as parliamentary papers;

that is, as part of the free distribution of the PPS, 25 copies of the PPS version of a report are provided to the bookshops for bookshop sales — these may be the only copies of the report that are for sale through the bookshops, as the bookshops management may have decided at the time the original report was printed to not order ordinary copies of the report for sale in the bookshops — this is certainly the case in relation to Senate committee reports, as AGPS practice is to order bookshop sales copies of such reports in exceptional circumstances only, which increases the reliance on the PPS and PPS copies for sale in the bookshops;

- although the AGPS attempted to produce a CD ROM compilation of the 1994-95 annual reports for executive departments and principal statutory authorities, and is currently producing the 1995-96 edition, the late availability of the CD version (over 3 months after the printed versions were tabled in October 1996) and the limited nature of the contents (executive departments and principal statutory authorities only are covered, out of the over 300 annual reports that appear in the PPS each year) make this a poor alternative at best;

- very few annual reports and parliamentary committee reports currently appear on the Internet, and not all recipients of the PPS necessarily have access to the Internet;

further, it is not easy, using current technology, to download a complete copy of a report from the Internet if a printed copy of a report is required;

- it is this department's understanding that AGPS has found in some cases that when a report is loaded on the Internet, there is a greater flow-on demand for the printed copies, that is, increased bookshop sales; if, as is usually the case, the only copies the bookshops have are the PPS version of the report, this demand is met from the PPS stock that is provided to the bookshops — if the PPS is discontinued this demand may go unsatisfied.

#### *4.2 Availability as a permanent record*

The second issue that arises from the purposes of the PPS is the permanent availability of the data contained in the PPS. Although some of the documents contained in the PPS may be available through other mechanisms, the PPS has been and continues to be the only comprehensive series of documents recording the administration and operation of the Commonwealth Government, the Australian Parliament and its committees that has been printed and available since Federation. It brings together in one series a wide variety of reports which provide researchers with an ongoing and often unique record of many aspects of Australian government and administration.

At present, the printed version is the only means for making this series of documents available in its entirety. However, access to documents on the Internet has been suggested as an alternative also for reference and research purposes. Certainly the Internet meets the immediate requirements of access at the time a document is first produced. However, there are a number of problems with access through the Internet:

- as stated above, very few documents that are part of the PPS are currently being loaded onto the Internet by their author body;
- even if they are loaded onto the Internet, there is no central location for these documents;
- the versions of documents that are loaded onto the Internet often do not match the printed tabled version — for example, the Internet version may not contain the financial statements, other tabular data and non-text information;
- Internet users and AGPS have repeatedly experienced difficulties in trying to print larger reports from the Internet;

- many libraries with Internet access do not provide downloading or printing facilities for their users;
- information on the Internet is ephemeral at best, and there is no guarantee that documents loaded onto the Internet today will necessarily be available for reference and research purposes five years down the track, let alone 50 or 100 years on.

#### *4.3 Conclusion*

Alleged availability elsewhere should not be relied upon as a ground for discontinuing the PPS, as there is no guarantee that in that case all documents currently available through the PPS would be as readily available, nor is their continued availability well into the future guaranteed.

In order to determine the adequacy or otherwise of the Internet or another form of publication or access as an alternative to the PPS, the following issues would need to be explored:

- the extent to which the documents that currently comprise the PPS can be found on the Internet or other prevailing alternative form of publication and/or access;
- the number of organisations (that is, departments and statutory authorities) that use that alternative form;
- the means for archiving the data, if that alternative form is utilised, for future reference and research needs.

#### **5. Financial issues**

There are financial burdens that accompany the production of the series (primarily the administration and the indexing of the PPS, as well as the associated postage and distribution costs), that are currently borne by the House departments. However, the most substantial cost, that of printing the documents included in the PPS, is now borne by each author body. If the PPS in its current form is discontinued, many libraries and universities that recognise the value of the series and wish to have it maintained would each individually need to:

- devote their scarce resources to ascertaining which documents should be included in their own de facto PPS; and
- undertake the indexing of that series.

In addition, the House departments will still retain their own method of identifying, indexing, storing and retrieving the documents for their own purposes. Therefore, the centralisation of the tasks of identification and indexing in the House departments ensures the most efficient production of the PPS as an indexed series, rather than the duplication of effort and waste of resources entailed if each House department and library carried out these tasks individually. Continuation of these tasks should be regarded as a parliamentary contribution to informed public debate on governmental and parliamentary issues.

## 6. Options

### 6.1 *Continue Parliamentary Papers Series*

Several options are available to continue the PPS (some of which would reduce the costs of the PPS that accrue to the Parliament):

#### (a) Reduce free distribution list

The committee may choose to review the list of free recipients shown at attachment 1 and eliminate certain categories of eligible recipients and remove certain recipients, thus reducing the distribution of the PPS. However, the basis for such a review should be consistency with the purposes of the PPS.

Although some of the categories of recipients that currently receive free distribution of the PPS fall within the Joint Committee of Publications' 1977 guidelines for free distribution, the recipients in those categories do not provide general access to the PPS, which is not consistent with the first purpose of the series, of providing access for members of the Parliament and the general public. If that approach is considered by the committee to be appropriate and the committee decides to review the categories of recipients and restrict eligibility under the guidelines, it is recommended that the categories of recipients listed below could be eliminated:

- foreign embassies (18 pamphlet copies):

although the 1977 guidelines provide for free distribution to foreign embassies, there is no apparent reciprocity by the embassies currently on the list, nor are there any exchange obligations, according to discussions with the Gift and Exchange section of the National Library; and in any case, there does not appear to be any access by the general public;

accordingly the category of foreign embassies could be removed from the free distribution guidelines and the free list;

- municipal libraries (3 pamphlet copies):

although the 1977 guidelines also provide for free distribution to municipal libraries, and such libraries do provide general access to their holdings, that access is geographically limited to the municipality, and as access would in any case be available through the relevant State Library, there would be with little or no disadvantage to potential users if this category of recipient is removed;

accordingly the category of municipal libraries could be removed from the free distribution guidelines and the municipal libraries removed from the free list;

- political parties (4 pamphlet copies)

the 1977 guidelines also provide for free distribution to the national secretariats of political parties; currently three sets are provided to the national secretariat and two other branches of one political party and the fourth set is provided to a branch of another political party;

again there is no apparent general public access to the PPS through these organisations, and in any case, there should be no free distribution to the three branches of the political parties, as that distribution does not fall within the guidelines;

accordingly the category of political parties could be removed from the free distribution guidelines and the political party recipients removed from the free list.

The committee may also wish to consider removing the state parliamentary libraries and the New Zealand Parliamentary Library from the free distribution list. The reason for this recommendation is that those libraries receive a copy of every report tabled in the Parliament from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library. If this recommendation is adopted, the PPS distribution would be reduced by a further 7 pamphlet copies (the ACT Legislative Assembly library would continue to receive the PPS as it is not included in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library distribution of reports).

There is also some duplication of other overseas recipients of the PPS. Four recipients of the pamphlet PPS also receive blister packs:

- New Zealand Parliamentary Library
- Library of Congress, USA
- Canadian Parliamentary Library
- National Diet Library, Japan.



If these recipients are limited to one copy only (probably the blister pack), this would eliminate a further 4 copies of the PPS from the free distribution.

There are a number of categories under the 1977 guidelines which could be eliminated as eligible categories as they do not meet the general public access purpose of the PPS. In any case, there are no current recipients within these categories. The categories recommended to be removed from the guidelines are:

- teachers' colleges and other post secondary institutions that are not universities;
- secondary schools;
- newspapers and members of the Press Gallery (the Press Gallery receive copies of tabled government reports on the day of tabling through the Tabling Officer of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and committee reports from committee secretariats or on request from the Senate Table Office).

These categories could therefore also be removed from the guidelines.

There are also a number of individual recipients whose eligibility under the guidelines should be reviewed and whom it is recommended should either be removed from the free list or their entitlement reduced. These are:

- Australian Archives (8 pamphlet copies and 1 blister pack copy)

each state office of the Archives receives a pamphlet copy and the Head Office Library receives a pamphlet copy as well as a blister pack — the provision of this many copies to one government instrumentality is well beyond the guidelines, which allow 1 free copy only per government department (while the Australian Archives is not a government department, as the guidelines require, the functions of the Australian Archives warrant its inclusion on the free list);

it is therefore recommended that the seven state offices be removed from the free list and that 1 pamphlet copy and 1 blister pack copy only be provided to Australian Archives Head Office Library; the blister pack copy could be used as a reference set and the pamphlet copy loaned out to the state offices as required;

- Australian Museum (1 pamphlet copy)

the Australian Museum does not fall within any of the eligible categories in the 1977 guidelines and could therefore be removed from the free list;

- Joint Law Courts (1 pamphlet copy)  
High Court (1 pamphlet copy)  
Australian Law Reform Commission (1 pamphlet copy)  
Commonwealth Ombudsman (1 pamphlet copy)

these organisations are not government departments (the category prescribed in the guidelines) and should therefore be removed from the free list — if they require access to particular parliamentary papers, they can use the copy in the library of their portfolio department, the Attorney-General's Department, which is also on the free list;

- Public Service and Merit Protection Commission (1 pamphlet copy)  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (1 pamphlet copy)

similarly, these organisations are not government departments and should therefore be removed from the free list — if access is required to particular parliamentary papers, they can use the copy in the library of their portfolio department, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, which is also on the free list;

- Australian Taxation Office (1 pamphlet copy)  
Australian Bureau of Statistics (1 pamphlet copy)  
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (1 pamphlet copy)

these organisations are also not government departments and should therefore be removed from the free list — if access is required to particular parliamentary papers, they can use the copy in the library of their portfolio department, the Department of the Treasury, which is also on the free list;

- Hunter Valley Research Organisation (1 pamphlet copy)

this organisation does not fall within any of the eligibility categories in the 1977 guidelines; also, there is no apparent general public access to the PPS through this organisation and in any case any access would be geographically limited;

the Hunter Valley Research Organisation therefore should be removed from the free list.

If the above recommendations are adopted, the PPS distribution would be reduced by 54 pamphlet copies (approximately 18% of the current total parliamentary paper free distribution, including pamphlet distribution, distribution of parliamentary papers through LDS/FIS and distribution of blister packed/bound volumes).

A further reduction can be implemented if the various distributions to universities and higher education institutions are rationalised. As can be seen from attachment 3, there are 35 universities and higher education institutions that currently receive parliamentary papers,

however, a total of 64 copies of the PPS version of reports are distributed to these institutions, either directly through the PPS and/or through the LDS/FIS. By rationalising these distributions and ensuring that each library received one copy only of the PPS version of documents (for example, by providing only the LDS/FIS copy of a parliamentary paper and eliminating the distribution of blister packs, so that there is no duplicated distribution between the LDS/FIS and the pamphlet distribution of parliamentary papers – see attachment 3), the PPS distribution would be reduced by a further 27 copies (approximately 9% of the current total parliamentary paper free distribution).

Similarly, the 8 principal reference libraries (the National Library and the 7 State and the Northern Territory libraries) receive a total of 18 copies between them (see attachment 2). If these libraries were limited to one copy each of the PPS version of documents through the LDS/FIS (except for the National Library, which would receive 2 copies — 1 blister pack and 1 through LDS/FIS), the PPS distribution would be reduced by a further 8 copies (approximately 3% of the current total parliamentary paper free distribution).

These rationalisations would thus reduce the PPS by 78 copies in total (approximately 28% of the current total parliamentary paper free distribution). This would reduce costs for both the author body and the House departments.

(b) Eliminate free list distribution

Another option is to not offer any free distributions apart from the legal obligations under the *Copyright Act 1968* to provide a set of published material to the National Library. Any other recipients who wish to continue to receive the PPS would be required to pay for a subscription to the series. However, as subscription payments would be paid to the AGPS, the House departments would not recoup any of their costs. Nonetheless, this would allow the AGPS to charge their normal over-the-counter sale price for PPS documents plus postage and packaging costs to each customer. The House departments would be responsible only for the administration of the series and postage and packaging charges for the stock they receive.

(c) Charge recipients of free distribution a service fee to recover administration/postage costs

Alternatively, recipients could be charged an annual service fee by the House departments, for example, in the order of \$1500 per recipient, to cover in part the costs of the administration of the PPS, the indexing of the PPS, and the associated postage and distribution costs. The House departments would continue to pay the postage and distribution costs charged by the AGPS for PPS distribution, however, they would also be able to retain some of the service fee as a contribution towards their own costs.

(d) Use of alternative methods of publication

CD ROM versions or the Internet are not currently viable alternatives to the printed PPS, as they do not provide comprehensive access to all the documents in the PPS and currently there are problems in printing copies from the Internet. There is also no assurance of permanent availability in the case of the Internet. These and other alternative methods of publication could be reconsidered once they are more widely used and available.

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The first three options listed above are predicated on the continued indexing and administration of the PPS by the House departments.

They are also predicated on the continued existence of the AGPS distribution services to carry out that function for the PPS. However, it should be noted that the existence of the AGPS in its current form is under review. The AGPS may not in fact continue to exist in its present form and may be unable to carry out its current distribution function, in which case the proposals for the continued existence of the PPS will need to be re-examined by the committee.

*6.2 Extension of the AGPS Library Deposit and Free Issue Schemes*

Another option is to discontinue the PPS and extend the LDS/FIS to include all documents<sup>1</sup> and parliamentary committee reports currently tabled in Parliament. Stocks for distribution through the LDS/FIS could be supplied to the Tabling Officer, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at the same time as the tabling copies are supplied. The Tabling Officer could forward those additional copies to the LDS/FIS at the AGPS for distribution. Stocks of committee reports would also need to be forwarded to the LDS/FIS by the committee offices of the House departments for distribution. This is particularly relevant for Senate committee reports as currently they are deposited with the LDS/FIS for distribution in their PPS version only.

This would relieve the House departments of the costs relating to distribution and administration of the scheme and would transfer these costs to the AGPS community service obligations, through the LDS/FIS. However, under this proposal, no parliamentary index would be prepared of the documents.

The disadvantage of this option is that the numbered and indexed series as it now exists (and that is seen by libraries to be of considerable reference and research value) will cease to exist.

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<sup>1</sup> It is envisaged that documents such as delegated legislation, documents produced under an order of the Senate, portfolio budget statements and other similar documents would not be included.

### 6.3 *Discontinue the Parliamentary Papers Series*

The final option is to discontinue the PPS in its entirety. The department does not support this option at this time. While this option would initially produce significant savings for the House departments and author bodies, it is the view of this department that this option, in the longer term, would be likely to result in increased costs for the House departments and author bodies.

The Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that the documents presented to each House are widely available to the public. Discontinuing the PPS would result in increased demands being placed on the financial, administrative and staffing resources of the Table Offices and author bodies to provide copies of tabled reports to persons requesting them.

If no printed copies or a limited number of copies only of PPS documents were available, and the Table Office of this department had to rely on CD ROM and/or the Internet in order to provide copies of those reports to its primary clients (that is, senators), as well as the public, it would be faced with the costs involved in establishing and maintaining a demand printing facility. An increase in requests for documents from the public would also require the employment of additional inquiries staff to deal with the requests.

## 7. Conclusion

At this time, the PPS appears to be the most cost-efficient and effective way of ensuring the wide availability of documents tabled in the Parliament. A review of the current recipients would result in some reduction in costs. The LDS/FIS would be a viable alternative to the PPS only if author bodies currently contributing to the PPS were required to contribute stocks for distribution through the LDS/FIS. However, the LDS/FIS does not provide the other essential feature of the PPS, namely, its distribution as a numbered, indexed annual series. Alternative methods of publication such as CD ROM and the Internet have not developed sufficiently to satisfy the current and long term needs of the users of the PPS and, in the case of the Internet, do not guarantee permanent access.

The Department of the Senate recommends that the PPS be continued, and further recommends that the guidelines and list of current recipients be reviewed to eliminate duplication and limit distribution to a more restricted range of recipients as set out in section 6.1.

# RECIPIENTS OF FREE DISTRIBUTION PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

GROUP	PAMPHLET	BOUND/BLISTER PACK
State, inc. National Library	1	9 (National Library x 2)
Parliamentary	8	7
Municipal	4	
University	1*	27
Australian Archives	8	1
Foreign embassies	18	
Political parties	4	
Overseas	8	4
Government departments/ authorities	26	
Hunter Valley Research Foundation	1	
Department of the Senate	30 (or 50 for royal commission and committee reports)	1
Department of the House of Representatives	30 (or 50 for royal commission and committee reports)	1
LDS/FIS	41	
Commonwealth Government Bookshop counter sales	25	
	205 (or 245)	50

\* Australian Defence Force Academy

## MODE OF FREE DISTRIBUTION PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

GROUP	PAMPHLET	AGPS LIBRARY DEPOSIT SCHEME	BOUND/BLISTER PACK
State, inc. National Library	1	8	9 (National Library x 2)
Parliamentary	8		7
Municipal	4		
University	1*	32	27
Archives	8		1
Foreign embassies	18		
Political parties	4		
Overseas	8		4
Government departments	26		
Hunter Valley Research Foundation	1		
Department of the Senate	30 (or 50 for royal commission and committee reports)		1
Department of the House of Representatives	30 (or 50 for royal commission and committee reports)		1
AGPS		1	
Commonwealth Government Bookshop counter sales	25		
	164 or 204	41	50

\* Australian Defence Force Academy

[Figures based on data supplied by AGPS marketing report: AGPS Free Distribution and Marketing System Customer Reports by Publication, for publications nos. 44 and 45]

**FREE DISTRIBUTION TO UNIVERSITIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS**

UNIVERSITY	PAMPHLET COPY	AGPS LIBRARY DEPOSIT— PAMPHLET	BLISTER PACK
Charles Sturt University Library		1	1
Victoria University of Technology		1	
University of Western Sydney		1	
University of Technology, Sydney		1	1
University of Canberra		1	1
University of Wollongong		1	1
University of Western Australia		1	1
University of Tasmania		1	1
University of Sydney		1	1
University of Southern Queensland		1	
University of Queensland		1	1
University of New South Wales		1	1
University of New England		1	1
University of Newcastle		1	1
University of Melbourne		1	1
University of Central Queensland		1	1



University of Adelaide		1	1
Swinburne University of Technology		1	
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology		1	
Queensland University of Technology		1	1
Northern Territory University		1	
Monash University—Gippsland campus			1
Monash University—Caulfield campus		1	1
Macquarie University		1	1
La Trobe University		1	1
James Cook University		1	1
Griffith University		1	1
Flinders University of South Australia		1	1
Edith Cowan University		1	1
Deakin University		1	1
Curtin University of Technology and Information Service		1	1
Murdoch University		1	1
Australian National University		1	1
Australian Defence Force Academy	1		
Total	1	32	27

Macquarie University  
Monash University  
Murdoch University  
Northern Territory University  
Queensland University of Technology  
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology  
Swinburne University of Technology  
University of Adelaide  
University of Central Queensland  
University of Melbourne  
University of Newcastle  
University of New England  
University of New South Wales  
University of Queensland  
University of Southern Queensland  
University of Sydney  
University of Tasmania  
University of Western Australia  
University of Wollongong  
University of Canberra  
University of Technology Sydney  
University of Western Sydney  
Victoria University of Technology

The AGPS Library Services unit administers the schemes and  
represents claims. For further information contact:

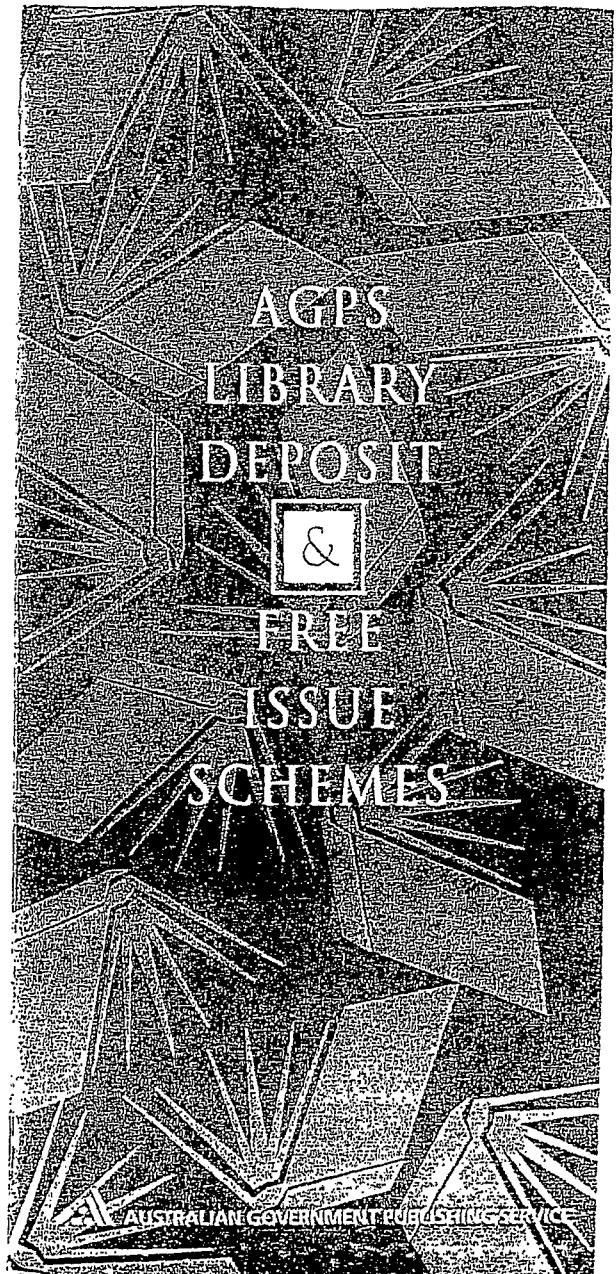
OIC Library Services  
Australian Government Publishing Service  
GPO Box 84  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Tel: (06) 295 4836

Please contact your Publishing Consultant on (06) 295 4411  
for information on the AGPS Total Publishing package



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5/9/95



The Library Deposit and Free Issue schemes are provided by AGPS Library Services as a service to both AGPS clients and the Australian public.

The deposit of Commonwealth publications in selected libraries was recommended in the 1964 report of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary and Government Publications (the Erwin Committee).

Two schemes are now in operation:

- the deposit scheme to the National Library of Australia and State reference libraries, which commenced in 1970;
- the free issue scheme to university libraries, which started in 1974.

In addition, one copy of each publication is lodged with AGPS Library Services, which is responsible for the administration of the schemes and for the compilation of the fortnightly *Commonwealth publications official list*. This is a complete list of all AGPS publishing activities which is distributed to over 2700 libraries and educational institutions.

The purpose of both schemes is to create collections of Commonwealth government publications which are freely available to library users. This is fully in accord with the Commonwealth Government's access and equity strategy. Member libraries agree to provide access and assistance to users within the usual hours of opening. The following conditions also apply:

- Each member library is entitled to receive free of charge one copy of each AGPS publication. The term 'publication' includes all book and non-book material intended for use beyond the author agency, but does not include forms or any document having a security restriction placed on it.

- The degree of cataloguing and classification accorded the collection is optional, but material should be organised so as to allow easy retrieval.
- Deposit libraries are expected to retain all material except for predetermined categories (such as duplicates, off prints, works superseded by later editions and ephemera). Free issue libraries may exercise discretion in discarding titles that they consider inappropriate to their collections, although they are expected to notify AGPS on a regular basis about categories of work no longer retained.
- Multicampus universities receive one free issue set only. Location of the set is at the discretion of the university.

The following libraries participate in the schemes:

#### *Deposit Libraries*

National Library of Australia  
State Library Board of Western Australia  
State Library of New South Wales  
State Library of Queensland  
State Library of South Australia  
State Library of Tasmania  
State Library of Victoria  
State Reference Library of Northern Territory

#### *Free Issue Libraries*

Australian National University  
Charles Sturt University Library  
Curtin University of Technology and Information Service  
Deakin University  
Edith Cowen University  
Flinders University of South Australia  
Griffith University  
James Cook University  
La Trobe University

## AGPS GUIDELINES FOR DEPOSITORY AND FREE ISSUE LIBRARIES

### Deposit Scheme

AGPS automatically lodges one copy of every publication with the National Library, state reference libraries and most university libraries.

Details of publications lodged with the AGPS Library Deposit Scheme are recorded in the Australian Government Index of Publications (AGIP) which is available on Internet. The index also provides the basis for printed catalogues which are distributed through the Government Info Shops and targeted mailouts.

The following guidelines and objectives of the deposit scheme are intended to cover AGPS depository (State and national) and free issue (university) libraries.

### *Objectives*

The purpose of the AGPS deposit scheme is to create collections of material published by AGPS which are freely available for the use of library users and which, with the exception of categories of material specified in the guidelines below, should be preserved.

### *Guidelines*

1. Each depository and free issue library is entitled to receive free of charge one copy of each publication of AGPS.
2. The term 'publication' includes all book and non-book material intended for use beyond the author department or organisation, but does not include forms or any document having a security restriction placed upon it.
3. Access to deposit material within the library and assistance to users should be provided on request within the usual hours of opening. The means of arrangement of the deposit collection is optional, but material should be so organised as to allow retrieval. Cataloguing of all material is also optional.
4. Depository libraries may discard the following categories of material at the end of the period indicated or at any later date:
  - a. Publications which may be discarded immediately:
    - i. duplicates:
      - whether the duplicate is the deposit copy or the copy received directly from the author agency;
      - whether the same printing or a reprint; whether in hard copy or microform; whether casebound or paperback; whether in parliamentary paper or agency form;
    - ii. offprints or extracts;
    - iii. posters, postcards, wall and desk calendars;
    - iv. replacements: daily Hansard on receipt of weekly issues; weekly Hansard on receipt of bound volumes; loose parliamentary papers, votes and proceedings, journals, acts and statutory rules on receipt of bound volumes; loose-leaf pages

- on receipt of updating pages; pamphlet reprints of acts and statutory rules on receipt of later reprints; pamphlet reprints of repealed acts and statutory rules. (Bills may not be discarded on receipt of reprints for later readings or for the other House of Parliament, or on receipt of acts.);
- v. monographs for which there is a later printing that is 'reprinted with amendments'.
- b. Publications which must be retained until receipt of a superseding item or, in lieu of this, for a period of twelve months:
  - i. education directories, calendars, handbooks;
  - ii. other directories;
  - iii. career information;
  - iv. departmental brochures providing information about government services and those designed for public education;
  - v. notice papers of either House of Parliament.

If there is other deposit material that a library wishes to discard because it considers the item has short-term usefulness, that it is not a publication or for which the library has a special reason, the library should notify the Manager, Commonwealth Information Services, AGPS on a title by title or series by series basis or by some other identifiable means. AGPS will circularise its decision to all depository libraries.

*Options for notification are:*

Send an email to [micheal.harrington@das.gov.au](mailto:micheal.harrington@das.gov.au)

Surface mail

Manager, Commonwealth Information Services  
AGPS  
GPO Box 84  
Canberra ACT 2601

Fax (06) 295 4999

Telephone inquiries can be directed to AGPS Library Services, (06) 295 4836.

5. Access to deposit material should be provided within the depository library.
6. Free issue libraries may exercise discretion in discarding deposit material which they consider inappropriate for retention in their collections. They notify the Manager, Commonwealth Information Services, AGPS of material that has been discarded on a title by title or series by series basis, or by some other identifiable means. The first report was due by 30 June 1993. Thereafter reports should be made at three yearly intervals. AGPS will examine these reports and will draw a library's attention to any contravention of these guidelines. It reserve the right to remove a library's free issue status if it considers that the library continues to act irresponsibly.
7. Deposit material sent to free issue libraries which is distributed to branch and departmental libraries within the parent institution should be regarded as having been

discarded except if the receiving library intends to preserve the material indefinitely. In this case, the receiving library should inform the free issue library if it subsequently reverses this decision, and the free issue library should report the material as having been discarded in its next three yearly report to AGPS.

8. Depository and free issue libraries discarding material should give priority to offering that which has some permanent value to public libraries. This may be done either by circulation list or by some more informal arrangement.
9. The Manager, Commonwealth Information Services, AGPS is the AGPS officer responsible for liaising with deposit and free issue libraries, and is available to advise on the arrangement and accessibility of the deposit collection in each library.

#### *Claims for missing issues*

Missing items can be identified from the following sources:

consignment notices sent with deposit shipment;  
Commonwealth Publications Official List;  
Australian Government Index of Publications(AGIP) on Internet.

#### *Claims procedure*

1. Cite title and other bibliographic detail, including ISBN/AGPS catalogue number.
2. Indicate the source of your information.

If claiming from a source other than those mentioned above, photocopy the source and include with claim.

3. The following items do not form part of the deposit scheme and cannot be claimed:  
commercial publications produced by AGPS Press and other Commonwealth business enterprises;  
non-federal government publications produced by AGPS;  
works over twelve months old;  
Commonwealth government publications not published by AGPS.

Options for notification are:

Send an email to [tomicheal.harrington@das.gov.au](mailto:tomicheal.harrington@das.gov.au)

Surface mail

Manager, Commonwealth Information Services  
AGPS  
GPO Box 84  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Fax (06) 295 4999

Telephone inquiries can be directed to AGPS Library Services, (06) 295 4836.

## LIST OF LIBRARIES IN RECEIPT OF DEPOSITORY AND FREE ISSUE MATERIAL

The following libraries participate in the AGPS Library Deposit Scheme in accordance with AGPS guidelines:

National Library of Australia  
State Library Board of Western Australia  
State Library of New South Wales  
State Library of Queensland  
State Library of South Australia  
State Library of Tasmania  
State Library of Victoria  
State Reference Library of Northern Territory  
Australian National University  
Charles Sturt University Library  
Curtin University of Technology and Information Service  
Deakin University  
Edith Cowen University  
Flinders University of South Australia  
Griffith University  
James Cook University  
La Trobe University  
Macquarie University  
Monash University  
Murdoch University  
Northern Territory University  
Queensland University of Technology  
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology  
Swinburn University of Technology  
University of Adelaide  
University of Central Queensland  
University of Melbourne  
University of Newcastle  
University of New England  
University of New South Wales  
University of Queensland  
University of Southern Queensland  
University of Sydney  
University of Tasmania  
University of Western Australia  
University of Wollongong  
University of Canberra  
University of Technology, Sydney  
University of Western Sydney  
Victoria University of Technology  
AGPS Library Services

# Joint Committee on Publications

## Inquiry into the Proposed Discontinuation of the Parliamentary Papers Series

Supplementary Submissions/Additional Information Requested by  
Committee

No. 54A

Response from: Harry Evans, Clerk of the Senate,  
Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT

Received: 15 May 1997



## **SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED DISCONTINUATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES**

### **1. Summary**

In the course of the committee's hearing on Monday, 24 February 1997, the Department of the Senate agreed to provide a supplementary submission to the committee, covering the following matters:

- the department's assent print subscription service;
- the charges to AGPS for copies of Senate committee reports that are printed in-house by the department.

### **2. Senate Assent Print Subscription Service**

This service, together with the House of Representatives Assent Print Subscription Service, was established in February 1996, to come into effect for the beginning of the 1996-97 financial year.

The purpose of the subscription services is to charge legal publishers an annual service fee in return for the provision of printed copies of assent prints.

As the number of assent prints prepared varies significantly between the Departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives, each service is administered separately, with different fees charged by the departments.

These fees have been calculated having regard to:

- the run-on costs of printing and binding copies of assent prints;
- the professional services of and care taken by Table Officers in preparing and checking the copies of assent prints
- the administrative costs of packaging and mailing copies of assent prints.

The annual fees for each department for 1996-97 were:

Senate	\$1000.00
House of Representatives	\$2500.00.

These figures will be indexed each year in line with increases in the Consumer Price Index.

At the time this department's service was established, there were six recipients of free printed copies of assent prints. Only four of these recipients (all legal publishers) subsequently subscribed to the service.

The service has generated the following revenue for the department to date:

1995-96	\$3000 (paid in advance for the 1996-97 financial year)
1996-97	\$1000.

### **3. Charges to AGPS for copies of Senate committee reports**

At the time that a Senate committee report is received by the Senate Printing Unit for printing, a job statement is prepared, costing the production of the printed copies of the report required by the relevant committee. The costing is calculated having regard to the following:

- costs of materials;
- salary costs including on-costs;
- depreciation and other fixed overheads.

Once the costing is calculated, the cost per copy is calculated, that is, the total cost divided by the number of copies to be produced.

AGPS is then advised that the report is being produced and is provided with details of its length, the terms of reference for the report and an approximate cost per copy (that is, the cost per copy calculated previously). AGPS then advises the Senate Printing Unit of the number of copies it wishes to purchase, for sales through the AGPS bookshops. It should be noted that the Department of the Senate has no input to the price (including any mark-up) ultimately charged by the AGPS bookshops for their sales of Senate committee reports.

In November–December 1996, the above process was varied slightly, in relation to two Senate committee reports: the reports on the Telstra (Dilution of Public Ownership) Bill 1996 and the Workplace Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 1996. The Senate Printing Unit was unable to print sufficient copies for AGPS within the required time frame. AGPS was therefore provided with a master of each report and arranged its own printing runs of the reports. AGPS therefore met its own costs involved in this process.