

1998–99

**PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

COMMITTEE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Report on the operations of the Committee for 1998

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Committee of Members' Interests

Membership

39th Parliament

Hon A Somlyay MP (Chair)
Hon J A Crosio MP (Deputy Chair)
Mr K J Andrews MP
Mr H A Jenkins MP
Mr P Neville MP
Mr P Nugent MP
Mr N O'Keefe MP

38th Parliament

Hon. N B Reid MP (Chair) (resigned as member of the committee, 14 October 1996 re-appointed 4 February 1997)
Mr A M Somlyay MP (elected as Chair 14 October 1996, resigned as Chair 13 February 1997, resigned as member of the committee 23 October 1997)
Mr K J Andrews MP (appointed 14 October 1996)
Mr E L Grace MP
Mr H A Jenkins MP
Hon D F Jull MP (Appointed 23 October 1997)
Hon S P Martin MP
Mr P C Neville MP
Mr M J C Ronaldson MP (resigned as member of committee 14 October 1996)
Mr W L Taylor MP (appointed 14 October 1996, resigned 4 February 1997)

Clerk to the Committee:

Mr B C Wright

Introduction

1. Under the provisions of standing order 28A by which the Committee is established, the Committee is required, as soon as practicable after each 31 December, to prepare and table in the House a report on its operations during that year.
2. This is the report of the Committee for the calendar year 1998.

Responsibilities of the Committee

3. Standing order 28A sets out the following terms of reference for the Committee:

- (i) to inquire into and report upon the arrangements made for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of a Register of Members' Interests;
- (ii) to consider any proposals made by Members and others as to the form and content of the register;
- (iii) to consider any specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests;
- (iv) to consider what changes to any code of conduct adopted by the House are necessary or desirable;
- (v) to consider what classes of persons (if any) other than Members ought to be required to register and declare their interests; and
- (vi) to make recommendations upon these and any other matters which are relevant.

A report in accordance with these terms of reference follows.

Arrangements made for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of the register

4. No change was made to the arrangements by which the register is maintained. Since 1986 arrangements approved by the Committee provided that the register could be inspected, by appointment, between 10 am and 12 noon and 2 pm and 4 pm on working days in the office of the Registrar. In addition the Registrar may grant permission for the register to be inspected outside of those hours if the Registrar is satisfied that the circumstances surrounding the request warrant the exercise of such a discretion.
5. In total the register was inspected on thirty-seven occasions during the year. Five of these inspections were made outside of the standard hours. These inspections take no account of the use of copies of statements of interests and notifications of alterations of interests tabled by the Chair and made available through the Table Office.
6. Notification of alterations of interests received were tabled on 8 April 1998 (alterations received between 4 December 1997 and 8 April 1998) and 2 July 1998, (alterations received between 8 April 1998 and 1 July 1998). The Register for the 38th Parliament was closed with the dissolution of the House on 31 August 1998. Notifications of alterations received from 1 July until 31 August 1998 were not therefore tabled, although they were included in the Register and made available for inspection.

The Register for the 39th Parliament was tabled on 8 December 1998. Members who had been Members of the 38th Parliament, were required to provide returns reaching back to the date of dissolution (as well as alterations since that date). Newly elected Members were required to make declarations as at the date of their election (as well as alterations since that date).

Proposals made by Members and others as to the form and content of the Register

7. No proposals were received for the alteration of the form or content of the register.

Specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests

8. No formal complaint in relation to the registration of interests was received during the year. The House of Representatives itself had deleted the requirement for the oral declaration of interests in 1989 and this part of the requirements set out in standing order 28A is no longer applicable.

Changes to any code of conduct

9. The House has not adopted any code of conduct for Members, notwithstanding the tabling of such a draft code by the Speaker, on behalf of a working group, on 21 June 1995. The Committee was, therefore, not required to consider this matter.

Registration of interests by other classes of person

10. The Committee did not consider this matter during 1998.

Other matters

Appreciation

11. The committee records its appreciation for the contributions made to its work by the Hon N B Reid. Mr Reid was Chair of the Committee in the 38th Parliament. The Committee is most grateful for his service in that capacity. The Committee also places on record its appreciation of the contribution of those other Members who service on the Committee ended in the last Parliament, namely Messrs E L Grace, D F Jull, S P Martin, M J C Ronaldson and W L Taylor.

(HON. A SOMLYAY)

Chair