



## **INQUIRY INTO PRINTING STANDARDS FOR DOCUMENTS** **PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT**

### **OPENING STATEMENT**

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## Introduction

1. The Printing Industries Association of Australia ("*Printing Industries*") is the peak industry body for the print, visual communications and media technologies sector. In terms of traditional print, *Printing Industries* represents about 80% of the volume of print production capacity in Australia.
2. Canberra-based business, CanPrint Communications Pty Limited (CanPrint) (and its related entities) has produced printed documents for Government Departments and Agencies since 1967.
3. CanPrint's extensive and lengthy experience in producing parliamentary documents means that its representatives here today can provide the Committee with arguably expert input to the several of the issues under inquiry.
4. Our earlier written submission focussed on the broader concept of the costs of producing Commonwealth documents and value for money. However, with CanPrint here today, we can assist the Committee with more specific issues, such as:
  - The production, printing and distribution of documents
  - Practical issues around achieving the standards required to publish online.
5. In the context, our input to this Inquiry is based on lessons learned from the process of printing documents at premises external to Government premises.
6. We understand that the following documents comprise this category:
  - Bills, Explanatory Memoranda, Acts – CanPrint currently prints 100% of these.
  - Senate Journals; Audit Reports – CanPrint currently prints 100% of these.
  - Budget publications (together with related materials).
  - Annual Reports – CanPrint estimates that it prints 50% of these.

## **In Summary**

7. The volume of printed documents tabled in parliament has clearly declined and continues to do so. We accept and will continue to work with this.
8. However, *Printing Industries* believes that in a range of situations:
  - Printing parliamentary documents delivers value for money
  - Publishing online in lieu of printing every document tabled in Parliament may seem superficially attractive but needs significant improvement and advances before it will deliver the same value as print
9. Ceasing to print parliamentary documents and publishing (solely) online raises the following issues.

## **Cost**

10. It is unusual for the cost of physically printing a document to comprise the majority of the overall costs of the document. Most of the cost is comprised of preparatory work, which would still need to occur for online publication.
11. For example, physically printing Annual Reports comprises (on average) only 20% of the total costs of production.

## **Accessibility**

12. The print industry in general regularly deals with customers who replace printed documents with online publication. Many of those customers return sometime later, having realised that a proportion of their user-base prefers printed material. Those customers often reduce the number of printed copies, and combine print with online publication.

## **Security**

13. Many parliamentary documents are confidential until presented to Parliament. CanPrint is proud of its security processes. Care would be needed to ensure that online preparation achieves the same levels of security.

## **The cost of printed documents**

14. CanPrint's 50% share of the market for producing documents tabled in Federal Parliament includes Bills, Explanatory Memoranda, Acts and Annual Reports.
15. CanPrint's internal sales data shows a current spend on printed tabled documents of no more than \$1.5m per annum. Included in this \$1.5 million is the (now discontinued) production of case-bound Hansard volumes.
16. Extrapolating from CanPrint's 50% market share, it is fair to estimate that the current total spend per annum on documents printed external to Government premises is about \$3 million per annum.
17. Any potential monetary savings from replacing print with online (only) should be assessed in this context.

## **The costs of online publishing**

18. Like a document to be printed, material to be published online still needs to be edited, designed, typeset and indexed. It needs additional work to ensure search engine optimisation and usability so readers can find what they are searching for.
19. In the experience of CanPrint, the real cost of producing (for example) printed Annual Reports is not in the printing of them. In the majority of cases, the print element accounts for 20% or less of the total cost, with the conversion of the original Word version of a document to an accessible HTML version costing more than print.

## **More details about the costs of publishing online - Annual Reports**

20. In CanPrint's view, any aim to save costs would most effectively be achieved in the printing of Annual Reports.
21. (In terms of Annual Reports printed by CanPrint) quantities for Annual Reports have reduced from 2,000 printed copies in 2010 to an average 350 copies in 2016.
22. Savings can be achieved in the printing of Annual Reports if the design of Annual Reports complied with the guidelines:  
[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Chamber\\_documents/Tabled\\_Papers/Advice to government agencies](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Chamber_documents/Tabled_Papers/Advice_to_government_agencies)
23. In CanPrint's experience, the designing of Annual Report continually pushes the boundaries of the guidelines, increasing overall costs. Enforcement of the existing guidelines would deliver cost savings without a reduction in quantity.
24. Currently the usual process for printing an Annual Report that Department staff write and compile the Report, then:
  - External suppliers edit, index, design and typeset (this may also include production of infographics) – this work is all necessary in preparing a document for publication online
  - (In CanPrint's case) CanPrint then creates a document accessible online, as well as printing the Report.
25. CanPrint provides a complimentary account management service for a number of Annual Report projects for clients and therefore sees all costs.
26. In CanPrint's experience, the cost of a printed copy run is a maximum of 20% of the total cost of the project, with 80% of the cost incurred in the preparatory work that remains necessary for preparing a document for publication online.
27. In others words, ceasing to print an Annual Report and instead publishing it solely online would save (only) 20% of the monies currently expended on preparing that Annual Report.

## **Standards required in publishing a document online**

28. Failing to comply with the required standards from the outset risks the value for money proposition for online publication.
29. Documents that are destined to be published online should be set up correctly from the outset to ensure that they can be efficiently put online in an accessible format. CanPrint has received documents from Departments, Agencies and their designers that have been provided in a format that makes the conversion to a WCAG 2.0 compliant web accessible, document an easy or cost effective process.
30. It makes sense to educate the authors of documents to set up templates correctly. If retrospective work is required, it can be like starting the document from scratch again, costing valuable time and money.
31. CanPrint produces time critical documents for tabling. Before such materials can be consigned to online versions only, an assessment needs to be made about whether they can be turned around in the same timeframe, with the work remaining onshore.

## **Practical examples about CanPrint's processes in delivering printed Parliamentary documents**

32. In the words of CanPrint:

### **Bills/ Explanatory Memoranda/ Acts**

- We receive short notice and we produce always within a 12-hour window, which is between 6pm and 6am when parliament sits.
- We deliver internally to all recipients inside parliament house each morning with CanPrint's security-cleared staff.

### **The Federal Budget and associated papers**

- We run our factory 24 hours a day over may weekend to produce.
- We meet staff from all departments and facilitate meetings with all of them.
- We project plan federal budget months in advance.
- We meet with many departments prior to budget to ensure a smooth production process.
- We work with all departments to ensure deadlines are met.
- We stop our plant to securely produce on federal budget work over the 72 Hour period. All under embargo conditions are applied.
- We have approx. 35 security-cleared key staff for production.
- A minimum of two security-cleared staff operates each vehicle that delivers budget papers.
- The volume of printed copies has gradually declined from 60,000 to 40,000.
- Turn-around times have become shorter.