



INQUIRY INTO PRINTING STANDARDS FOR DOCUMENTS
PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT

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Mary Jo Fisher
Director, Government Relations
maryjo@paaa.org.au
mob 0419 808 291

ABOUT US

About the Printing Industries Association of Australia

1. The Printing Industries Association of Australia ("*Printing Industries*") is the peak industry body for the print, visual communications and media technologies sector.
2. *Printing Industries* is a not-for-profit, membership-based association, and is registered as an industrial organisation under the *Fair Work Act*.
3. Formerly the *Printing and Allied Trades Association of Australia*, *Printing Industries* has been the peak industry association representing print industry companies for over 200 years.
4. Traditionally, *Printing Industries* represented what would now be regarded as the print sector trades. However, as print, visual communications and media technologies continue to evolve, so does *Printing Industries*' membership. Membership now extends as far as peripheral service providers for the print media technologies sector.
5. In terms of traditional print, *Printing Industries* represents about 80% of the volume of print production capacity in Australia.
6. We believe that absent the car industry, print and its allied industries form the biggest employer in Australia's manufacturing sector.

About our industry

7. The industry is an exemplar of innovation and adaptation. The environment for print remains under pressure, both from alternative communication channels and operational challenges.
8. Participating in a truly free international market, the industry is the most significant employer in the Australian manufacturing sector.
9. Yet the sector operates without any Government assistance or protection, in an environment in which it is directly exposed to the vicissitudes of global market forces and competitors.
10. Amidst all this, the industry is justly proud of its agility and ability to adapt, together with the efficiency it continues to gain through its ongoing innovation.

THE COSTS AND VALUE FOR MONEY OF PRODUCING GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS FOR PARLIAMENT

1. Our submission addresses the following term of reference:

The costs of producing Commonwealth documents and value for money.

2. Value for money is clearly not just about cost.
3. The principle of value for money was outlined in the Joint Committee on Publications' September 2007 report into printing standards for documents presented to Parliament. Drawing upon a range of evidence put before it (including that of Printing Industries), the Committee's report contained the following:

"Value for money is the core principle underpinning Australian Government procurement. In a procurement process this principle requires a comparative analysis of all relevant costs and benefits...

The Standards currently state the 'Commonwealth Government agencies are expected to obtain value for money in procuring services to publish and print documents'. Determining what qualifies as 'value for money', however, can become a subjective judgement.

*The best price is not the only determinant of value for money. Factors such as service and turn-around-time, the quality of the work, and an understanding of the agency's requirements, are all taken into account."*¹

CanPrint

4. In addressing this term of reference, we will draw to a large degree upon the experience and expertise of Canberra-based business, CanPrint Communications Pty Limited (CanPrint).
5. CanPrint has produced printed documents for Government Departments and Agencies since 1997 and through its subsidiary Union Offset Pty Limited, since 1967.
6. CanPrint currently has 50% of the market share for producing documents to be tabled in Federal Parliament. CanPrint currently employs 95 workers.
7. CanPrint's extensive and lengthy experience in producing parliamentary documents, coupled with its market share, allows it to provide well informed and arguably expert input to the term of reference at hand. The information which it provides is likely to be representative of many other businesses which currently produce parliamentary documents.
8. Clearly, CanPrint has a vested interest in the continued printing and production of parliamentary documents.

¹ Joint Committee on Publications, Printing Standards for Documents Presented to Parliament, September 2007, p. 19.

Background

9. The volume of printed documents to be tabled in parliament has clearly declined and continues to do so. This is in line with the move to online publishing.
10. *Printing Industries* acknowledges this decline. We also accept that there are some parliamentary documents for which an online version, backed up by a printed summary, would suffice.
11. However, *Printing Industries* believes that in a range of situations:
 - Printing parliamentary documents delivers value for money
 - Publishing parliamentary documents on-line seems superficially attractive but needs significant improvement and advances before it will deliver the same value for money as does print.

The cost of printed documents

12. CanPrint's 50% share of the market for producing documents tabled in Federal Parliament includes Bills, Explanatory Memoranda, Budget publications (together with related materials) and Annual Reports.
13. 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 production of case-bound Hansard volumes.
 - CanPrint would be happy to provide the Committee with evidence to support this spend.
14. Extrapolating from CanPrint's 50% market share, it is fair to estimate that the current total spend per annum on printed tabled documents is about \$3 million per annum.
15. Another submitter to this Inquiry claims that the Australian Government spends at least \$14 million per annum on printed tabled documents.
16. The contention reads:

"Around 7000 documents and reports are tabled in Parliament each year.

To print 182 copies of a 100-page document costs around \$2000.00, and many are longer than this. The hard copy requirement therefore costs the Australian Government at least \$14 million every year..."²
17. On its face, this contention is contestable.

² Biotext, submission to this Inquiry, p. 2, item 1

18. 7,000 documents may well be tabled in Parliament each year. However, there is no evidence that each is of 100-pages in length or (despite requirements to the contrary³) printed 182 times.
19. To the contrary, CanPrint's most recent experience is that whilst around 270 Annual Reports which it produces fit this description, the remainder do not.
 - CanPrint is happy to provide the Committee with evidence supporting this claim.
20. In the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, and based on CanPrint's experience, it is fair to conclude that the current total spend per annum on printed tabled documents is about \$3 million per annum.

The costs of online publishing

21. Like a document to be published, material to be published online (amongst other things) needs to be edited, designed, typeset and indexed. It needs additional work to provide a clear search engine and make it simple for a user to find that for which they are searching.
22. 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.
23. In other words, doing all the preparation of material to be published online costs more than both preparing a document to be printed (some but not all of which overlaps with the preparation for online) and then actually printing it.
24. Of course, this is based on all the work - print and conversion to online - being done in Australia.
25. For online publishing to deliver real cost savings, major investment is needed to ensure that material is prepared 'digital ready', so that conversion to a digital document is a streamlined process.
26. Currently, this is not the case. In CanPrint's experience, original files require considerable man-hours to get them to a standard fit for conversion to online.
 - CanPrint is happy to provide the Committee with evidence supporting this claim.

³ www.dpmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/PMC_Tabling_Guideleins_Feb_2016_0.pdf

Does the requirement for print hamper the accessibility and presentation of information online?

27. In its submission, Biotext asserts that:

“However, because the hard copy requirements lock authoring agencies into producing a print publication, they often do not have the time or resources to achieve best practice in this area...

As editors and designers, we frequently see government clients choosing the easy option, rather than what their audience may need, because of the printing requirements.”⁴

28. *Printing Industries* trusts that the Committee will test the basis of these assertions.

Timing

29. Timing is ‘of the essence’ for many documents produced for tabling in Parliament. Examples include Bills and the range of Budget papers. At the moment, these cannot be produced online as quickly as they can be produced and delivered to Parliament House in print.

Environmental considerations

30. Along with a large proportion of the printing industry, CanPrint has invested in implementing and maintaining recognised environmental accreditations (ISO 14001) to ensure that the impact of producing materials used in the print process and the process of printing itself is minimised. Some examples of environmental initiatives are: recycling 100% of paper waste, the use of vegetable inks, chemical free plate processing, water recycling on presses.

Australian jobs

31. CanPrint currently employs 95 workers. By way of example, and extrapolating this to print businesses beyond CanPrint, when the 20% slice of the cost of producing an Annual Report for Tabling (using a number of workers) is compared with the 20% cost of indexing a report (which requires one worker), print is doing a good job of supporting employment for Australians.

⁴ Biotext, submission to this Inquiry, p. 2, item 4