



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

DPS ref: 17/82/26

Mr George Christensen MP  
Chair  
Joint Committee on Publications  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Christensen

I refer to your letter of 20 February 2017 regarding the Committee's inquiry into the printing standards for documents presented to Parliament. The following submission has been prepared in consultation with the Parliamentary Librarian.

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) is the primary ICT service provider for Parliament. Parliamentary papers are core element of the Parliamentary Library's collection, and a key resource for its research for senators and members. The Library has recently commenced a major project to digitise the entire run of Parliamentary Papers from 1901-2012. DPS is committed to the development of an Enterprise Information Management function within the parliament and through this initiative making the digital preservation of key parliamentary documents a priority.

### **Current current level of need for printing standards and scope of their application**

Given the transition to an electronic Parliamentary Papers Series (ePPS), the Committee may wish to consider the benefits of broadening the scope of the printing standards so that they become publication standards for both hard copy and electronic documents.

Notwithstanding the transition to an ePPS, physical documents continue to be tabled in Parliament. Until the Houses elect to move to a wholly electronic process for tabled papers, minimum printing standards should be maintained, including the use of archival quality paper and binding, to enable the long term storage and preservation of these parliamentary records.

DPS notes the suggestion in the Clerk of the House of Representatives' submission to this Inquiry that, given the cessation of production of bound volumes of the PPS in 2011, the current requirement for B5 format be relaxed to an A4 standard. While the Parliamentary Library has continued to bind its reference set of tabled documents for preservation purposes, it could readily accommodate a change to an A4 standard. DPS is developing a 'print on demand' service for the Hansard collection, and there is potential for this to be extended to other digital collections in the future.

The transition to the ePPS provides important public benefit in providing direct and enduring access to information relating to the activities and role Australian Parliament and of the Executive Government. However, archival storage of digital records has its own challenges. To aid long term digital preservation, the Committee may wish to consider specifying minimum requirements for

accessibility, metadata and preservation file formats, perhaps drawing upon the expertise of the National Archives of Australia. We would be happy to provide the Committee with copies of the Parliamentary Library's digital preservation framework and policy once they have been endorsed by the Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library.

### **Practicality of the Parliamentary Papers Series in an online environment (terms of reference 6 and 7)**

#### *The Parliamentary Library's digitisation project*

The Parliamentary Library is undertaking a three year project to digitise the historical Parliamentary Papers Series (1901-2012), an estimated 50,000 reports amounting to some 2.4 million pages, with approximately 500 pull outs (maps and diagrams).

This initiative will enable greatly enhanced access to the historic papers series by parliamentary clients and by the general public. Each document in the series is being digitised as an individual file in PDF/A format (at a minimum 300 DPI) to help ensure long term preservation. (PDF/A is ISO 19005 compliant and has been identified as a sustainable format by the Library of Congress in its ['Recommended Formats Statement'](#)). The files will be full-text searchable.

A HTML rendition will also be available on the parliament's website to enable access by assistive technologies.

In addition, the project will also produce single page, uncompressed 400 DPI TIFF format files for each digitised paper for provision to the National Library of Australia (NLA) for direct ingestion into TROVE. The Parliamentary Library is working closely with the NLA to ensure the TIFF files and metadata meet its system requirements.

The outsourced physical digitisation is on schedule for completion this financial year. Quality assurance of scans and metadata by Library staff will continue with the final ingestion files into the parliamentary database expected to take place in 2018-19.

#### **Improved access to other tabled papers**

As the Committee is aware, the PPS comprises only a subset of papers and artefacts presented or deemed to be presented to Parliament, with only documents of a substantial nature ordered to be printed and included in the series.

Documents not ordered to be printed are listed in the *Journal of the Senate*, the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, and the Tabled Papers Register within ParInfo Search. However, for many of these papers, access is generally available only via a request to the departments of the Senate or House of Representatives. (Documents presented to the Senate 1901-2012 are available through the Senate Tabled Papers database). Access to these papers would be significantly enhanced were other documents presented or deemed to be presented also required to be provided digitally prior to tabling to facilitate their inclusion in the Tabled Papers Register dataset.

The Parliamentary Library would be happy to assist with the back-capture of these documents.

### **Enhanced functionality for the ePPS**

I note the comments of the Clerk of the House of Representatives regarding the need to develop a webpage interface to enable visibility and searchability of the PPS.

Currently the APH Website includes a limited search criteria capability, the search results are sourced from ParInfo Search. The search result itself is a hyperlink and when clicked will take the user back to ParInfo Search interface. DPS is committed to working collaboratively with the Department of the Senate and House of Representatives to leverage the APH website to improve the design and usability of this search function. This collaboration will be the focus of a project to be launched by DPS as part of the 2017-18 Capital Works Plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rob Stefanic', written over a horizontal line.

Rob Stefanic  
Secretary

6 March 2017