

1999–2000

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

COMMITTEE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Report on the operations of the Committee for 2000

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

Clerk to the Committee:

Mr B C Wright

Introduction

1. Under the provisions of standing order 329 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 2000.

Responsibilities of the Committee

3. Standing order 329 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 sixty-two occasions during the year. Six 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 and a Statement of Registrable Interests received during the period 9 December 1999 to 12 April 2000 were tabled on 13 April 2000. Alterations received from 17 April 2000 to 28 June 2000 were tabled on 29 June 2000 and alterations and a statement of registrable interests received during period 29 June to 6 December 2000 were tabled on 7 December 2000.

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 329 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 2000.

Other matters

11. The Registrar reported on Members reactions to the prototype of the electronic version of the Statement of Registrable Interests. The majority of Members who had responded had either favoured the option or said they had no objection. Members of the Committee agreed that the choice of the electronic version or the hard copy of the Statement should be offered at the start of the next Parliament.

(HON. A SOMLYAY)

Chair

8 March 2001.