

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SELECTION COMMITTEE

REPORT No. 77

Referral of bills to committees

14 March 2013

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Chair	Ms A. E. Burke, Speaker
Members	Mr A P Bandt MP
	Mr M M Coulton MP, Chief Nationals Whip
	Hon W G Entsch MP, Chief Opposition Whip
	Hon J L Fitzgibbon MP, Chief Government Whip
	Ms J G Hall MP
	Mr E N Husic MP
	Mr R J M Oakeshott MP
	Hon P M Ruddock MP
	Ms J A Saffin MP
	Mr P D Secker MP

	Hon B C Scott MP, Deputy Speaker

Secretary	Ms J Towner
Committee support	Mr J Rees
	Mr D Pecar
	Mr J Sherd
	Mrs A Fabbo

Report relating to the consideration of bills introduced 12 to 14 March 2013

1. The committee met in private session on 13 and 14 March 2013.
2. The committee determined that the following referrals of bills to committees be made—

Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and the Arts:

- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013

REASONS FOR REFERRAL/PRINCIPAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

This is a major change to the EPBC Act and requires very close scrutiny.

Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications:

- Broadcasting Legislation Amendment (Convergence Review and Other Measures) Bill 2013
- Television Licence Fees Amendment Bill 2013
- Broadcasting Legislation Amendment (News Media Diversity) Bill 2013
- News Media (Self-regulation) Bill 2013
- News Media (Self-regulation) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2013
- Public Interest Media Advocate Bill 2013

REASONS FOR REFERRAL/PRINCIPAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

Referral is proposed because of the extremely short timeframe the Government has proposed for consideration of these laws. The Government's so-called 'media reforms' are the largest shakeup of media regulation since 2006. Some of the most important elements of these measures, such as the precise criteria defining the 'public interest' which the legislation will apply to changes of media ownership, have not been publicly disclosed prior to introduction of these bills. As a result there has been no opportunity to consider any unintended consequences or conflicts with existing laws and regulations. The laws also propose the first direct government controls over material published in newspapers in peace time in Australian history. To expect the Parliament to debate and vote on such far-reaching bills without the opportunity to call witnesses, to hear evidence and to undertake the detailed objective scrutiny only a committee process provides would be an abuse of the democratic process.

Anna Burke MP
Chair
14 March 2013