



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

Reference: Future of the parliamentary papers series

CANBERRA

Monday, 1 September 1997

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

CANBERRA

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

Members:

Senator Sandy Macdonald (Chair)

Senator Calvert	Mr Cobb
Senator Chapman	Ms Ellis
Senator Jacinta Collins	Mr Richard Evans
Senator Colston	Mr Griffin
Senator Gibbs	Mr Lieberman
Senator McKiernan	Mr Martin
	Mr Mutch

Matter referred:

Future of the parliamentary papers series.

WITNESSES

**GODFREY, Mr Brendan, Deputy Secretary, Business Development,
Department of Administrative Services, 111 Alinga Street, Canberra,
Australian Capital Territory 93**

**GREGSON, Mr Jeremy, Manager, Public On-Line Facilities, Australian
Government Publishing Service, Wentworth Avenue, Kingston,
Australian Capital Territory 93**

**JOYE, Dr André, Acting General Manager, Australian Government
Publishing Service, Wentworth Avenue, Kingston, Australian Capital
Territory 93**

**MULLINS, Mr Paul Francis, Manager, Corporate Affairs, Australian
Government Publishing Service, Wentworth Avenue, Kingston,
Australian Capital Territory 93**

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Future of the parliamentary papers series

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Present

Senator Sandy Macdonald (Chair)

Senator Calvert

Mr Richard Evans

Senator Jacinta Collins

Mr Lieberman

Senator Gibbs

Senator McKiernan

The committee met at 9.38 a.m.

Senator Sandy Macdonald took the chair.

CHAIR—I declare open the third public hearing of the Joint Publications Committee in relation to its reference on the future of the parliamentary papers series. Last year the Presiding Officers wrote to the committee stating that they believed that in the tight budgetary environment the Parliament faces, the continuation of the parliamentary papers series in its current discrete hard copy format could not be sustained. The Presiding Officers had decided, however, that before progressing further it was desirable to obtain the advice of the joint committee.

To provide this advice, the committee is conducting an inquiry into the future of the series. It has already held two public hearings, in February of this year. The committee had scheduled an additional public hearing with the AGPS some months ago, but postponed that hearing until the sale of some elements of AGPS had been completed. This has now been done, and the committee can continue with the inquiry. Today the committee will take evidence from both the AGPS and the Department of Administrative Services.

For the record, this is a public hearing and, as such, members of the public are welcome to attend. However, I should point out that only the witnesses at the table are able to speak to the committee during the formal part of the proceedings.

Before we begin taking evidence, let me place on record that all witnesses are protected by parliamentary privilege with respect to submissions made to the committee and evidence given before it. Parliamentary privilege means special rights and immunities attached to the Parliament or its members and others which are necessary for the discharge of the functions of the Parliament without fear of prosecution. Any act by any person which operates to the disadvantage of a witness on account of the evidence given by that witness before any committee of the Parliament is treated as a breach of privilege.

GODFREY, Mr Brendan, Deputy Secretary, Business Development, Department of Administrative Services, 111 Alinga Street, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

GREGSON, Mr Jeremy, Manager, Public On-Line Facilities, Australian Government Publishing Service, Wentworth Avenue, Kingston, Australian Capital Territory

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CHAIR—Welcome. Do you wish to make an opening statement before the committee proceeds to ask questions?

Mr Godfrey—No, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR—I will start off with my questions, and then seek further questions from other members of the committee. At the time of the previous hearing the activities of the AGPS, which included community service obligations, were being market tested to determine which activities might be sold to the private sector. A sale has now been announced.

Firstly, which activities have been sold and which remain in the public sector? In particular, what has happened to the parts of the organisation which had the responsibility for the administration of parliamentary papers, the library deposit scheme, the free issue scheme and distribution and storage?

Mr Godfrey—I think the best way of starting that is to indicate which areas were subject to tender. We have not finalised all of the sale process, although it is nearing that stage, with the announcements last week for the core printing and the finalisation this week of the balance. The major parts that were sold were passport production; the core general printing, editorial and graphic design area, which includes parliamentary printing; and the instant print and copy centres located in Canberra and the regions. We also tendered for an information management strategic alliance. We have finalised that tender process, and have made announcements in respect of a majority of those parts of AGPS.

It is important to note that the community service obligation area of AGPS has not been affected by the sale process, but will work with the new joint ventures in our strategic alliance when that is announced, hopefully this week. The roles of information shops and parliamentary papers are unchanged as a result of the tender process and market testing.

In addition, the Department of Administrative Services has undergone a restructuring to take account of the major change in our operation and staffing numbers. With the sale of 11 businesses we have now come down to a core department of state, and that has resulted in a restructuring of the department. It has also meant that AGPS will no longer be a stand-alone business but will form one part of a division of the department called the Information Services Group.

I believe that the responsibility of those people remaining from the old AGPS will continue to cover all information policy, all information development and the standard arrangement functions that are currently performed and will also—hopefully—extend into digital standards and information access, which they have performed in their role as the AGPS.

CHAIR—How is it intended that the parliamentary papers, the library deposit scheme and the distribution activities be administered in future? In particular, the AGPS presently ensures that copies of documents are available for the series and, in some cases, even meets the costs of photocopying. Who will provide this service in future?

Dr Joye—AGPS will continue to provide this service on behalf of the Parliament. I do not anticipate any changes in the service as far as parliament would be concerned. The physical work of printing and the production work will be outsourced, but AGPS will continue to manage that process on behalf of Parliament.

CHAIR—At the moment the AGPS stores copies of parliamentary papers for distribution and other copies for subsequent binding and collation. Who will undertake those activities in the future and what costs will that involve for the AGPS and/or the parliamentary departments?

Mr Godfrey—Under the terms of the outsourcing, we have fixed the cost to the outsourcer until the end of this financial year. What we went out to tender for was an unspecified volume at a given price, that price being what AGPS had previously undertaken the work for. The responsibility for the work you have just outlined will remain with the Australian Government Publishing Service. I should add that the name ‘AGPS’ and its logo has been sold, but Australian Government Publishing Service is remaining. The responsibility for the actual work will be undertaken by either the tenderer who has won the core printing or any other person who can undertake that function at the best value for money for both Australian Government Publishing Service and the Parliament.

CHAIR—The AGPS told the committee in February that in the 37th Parliament it absorbed about \$90,000 of the cost of the series, which is not passed on to the parliamentary departments. Under the new arrangements, will the costs previously met by the AGPS be passed on? The committee estimates the cost to the AGPS as being about \$37,000 per annum. Could the AGPS confirm the accuracy of those figures as well?

Mr Mullins—Yes. The average invoice value for parliamentary papers in 1996 was \$165 per paper. The total cost to Parliament varies according to the number of papers ordered to be printed in that year. For the average of 400, the cost that we were recovering from Parliament was \$65,000 per annum. At the last hearing we mentioned that, to recover our costs, that would need to rise to \$90,000 per annum. Those were not production costs; they were the cost of staff time spent ensuring compliance. You might recall that we have had difficulty with departments lodging run-on copies for the parliamentary paper series, and we have a member of staff who spends a considerable amount of time chasing these up and ensuring that departments do provide those run-ons. It was those human resource charges that we have absorbed over the years. We believe that, to fully recover the costs, the figure would need to rise to \$90,000 per annum.

Another cost that was not being passed on was the storage cost of the parliamentary papers series. They are held in store until bound volumes are produced at the end of each parliament. At market rates that cost is about \$10,500 per annum, and that was not being charged to the Parliament. We will not have that storage facility in future, so we will have to outsource that storage cost and pass those charges on.

CHAIR—The AGPS, I understand, also stores other documents—for instance, final journals for binding for the parliamentary departments. Who will undertake these activities in the future?

Mr Mullins—That is yet to be decided. We still maintain a finished goods store which is for the stock for the bookshops. If those documents are held there we will continue to store them. At the moment, I think they are stored in the printing office. Those premises are going to be handed over to the new owner, but we have yet to decide what arrangements we are going to make for those.

CHAIR—Has the AGPS estimated the probable cost of the parliamentary papers series under the new commercialised arrangements? Has any estimate been made of the cost of the enhanced library deposit scheme as proposed by the Department of the House of Representatives? Is one scheme likely to be cheaper than the other?

Mr Mullins—No, we have not estimated the additional costs. It should be borne in mind that the cost of production of the run-on copies for the parliamentary papers series and the library deposit scheme are borne by the authoring department. They produce the copies for their own use for tabling and the run-ons. The additional library deposit scheme copies would be very marginal. Run-on of an average report is something like \$1 per copy—at the most, probably \$2 per copy. If the library deposit scheme were enlarged that is the nature of the additional production costs there.

There would be some additional costs incurred in storage and distribution. But again I would think that they would be marginal. The extension of the library deposit scheme, which we support in hard copy, would only impose marginal additional costs on

author departments supplying the additional copies. As we mentioned last time, we see that there is an electronic future for extending the library deposit scheme.

CHAIR—The Department of Administrative Services portfolio budget statement contains the statement that ‘the AGPS’s remaining activities are to be restructured and reviewed to determine whether any or all of those activities should be retained or market tested’. What progress has been made on restructuring and reviewing? Is the process likely to affect distribution arrangements for parliamentary papers and other publications on the free and subscription lists?

Mr Godfrey—I did mention that we had undertaken the restructure. That has been completed at the most senior level—the SES level. We will be commencing negotiations with staff today on the next layers of that process. It is expected that that will be finalised fairly quickly—hopefully by the first week of October. We have provided the same funding for community service obligations this year as last year. Therefore, I think the answer in respect of the situation with papers and availability is that it will remain unchanged as a result of the restructuring. It is my view that the restructure should provide greater policy and technical input by the Information Services Division which will be of assistance in the production and direction of changes in the papers series.

CHAIR—The portfolio budget statement also foreshadows a need for additional funding of \$2.79 million for the community service obligations. Would the activities funded from this source include administration of the parliamentary papers series or any replacement system? What other activities would be funded as community service obligations?

Mr Mullins—The portfolio budget statement foreshadowed an additional \$2.9 million being required. At the time that that was prepared provision was made for \$1.5 million for the application of competitive neutrality principles—which will now no longer apply—and also provision of \$1.4 million which was, in effect, the loss of subsidies from the profit making operations that are to be sold. The profits that were in those operations were ploughed back into the businesses. So, in effect, in relation to the additional \$2.9 million, the shortfall will only be about \$1.4 million.

The CSO funding is, in effect, for AGPS the difference between its revenue and its costs. They are agreed with the Department of Finance. They do cover such things as the administration of the parliamentary papers series, the public inquiry centres, the legislation program and Commonwealth publishing standards. But the shortfall—that is, revenue versus costs—is in fact the CSO funding. The need for those is independently audited by auditors on behalf of the Department of Finance. But to answer your question: yes, the CSO funding will cover the costs of AGPS administering the parliamentary papers series as all the activities that we do now will be non-commercial.

CHAIR—Since the AGPS previously appeared before the committee, have there

been any developments that are relevant to the committee's consideration of the proposal to discontinue the parliamentary papers series?

Mr Mullins—No, I would not think so. We believe that there will be an increasing use of the Internet for the publishing of government information. We believe there are significant opportunities there for the parliamentary papers series, but there have been no significant developments.

CHAIR—The additional DAS submissions suggested that. In the past, 50 to 70 per cent of parliamentary papers were published through the AGPS. With the sale of AGPS, what is the expectation for the future? If the AGPS were to lose all publishing, how would this affect the proposed library deposit scheme and free issues scheme?

Mr Mullins—We have already taken account of this. It is proposed under a revised AGPS charter that departments will be untied from AGPS for their publishing, and that is a move which we support. We will have a role in ensuring the provision of advice and indeed compliance as an agent of the Parliament, that all departments who are tabling documents in Parliament provide sufficient run-on copies to us for the series.

You might recall in our earlier submission we recommended that it be mandated into the tabling process that departments do produce the additional parliamentary papers series, that is, if you do not have sufficient run-on copies, your paper will not be tabled. We believe that that would be the most effective way of getting departments to comply. Hitherto, they have treated it as an AGPS requirement rather than a parliamentary requirement that we are administering as Parliament's agent, and compliance has been difficult. We will ensure that the departments do supply sufficient copies for the run-on.

CHAIR—In the preliminary report of the Information Management Steering Committee on Information Management in the Commonwealth Government there is a recommendation that the AGPS and the National Library of Australia collaborate more closely to provide a more comprehensive and timely on-line catalogue of all traceable Commonwealth publications. Are there any implications for the next parliamentary papers index and the papers presented to the parliament index?

Recently, the AGPS review of the library deposit scheme with a view to broadening library access to government information via the Internet has been undertaken with a corresponding US federal department library program, resulting in draft legislation to revamp the program into a federal information dissemination and access program and providing for free Internet access from designated libraries to a range of government information. Have there been any developments on the recommended review? Are there any implications for the recommended expanded library deposit scheme proposed by the Department of the House of Representatives?

Mr Mullins—Yes. In the case of the first recommendation on collaboration with

the National Library, that recommendation has been implemented. It emanated from a perception the committee had that there was some duplication in cataloguing effort. In other words, AGPS was preparing catalogue data of government publications for its own Australian government index of publications at the same time that the National Library's cataloguing people were cataloguing the same publications for their own collection. Since then, it has been agreed between ourselves and the National Library that AGPS will catalogue government publications and up-load that information to the National Library's bibliography. We are doing that on-line now.

As to the library deposit scheme, we have undertaken a review of that scheme and we are able to extend it. We think that the only way it can be extended to all libraries practically is via an Internet service. Mr Gregson can perhaps answer questions on the possibilities of using the Internet, but we believe that that is the way that the government intends to go in terms of distribution of information. Provided that we can overcome the practicalities of source data, we believe that the best way to extend the scheme would be to start concentrating on Internet publication.

CHAIR—Would you like to make a comment about anything, Mr Gregson?

Mr Gregson—As I understand it, the salient point about the difference in the situation that is evolving in Australia and the United States is that in Australia individual government departments and agencies are responsible at the moment for publishing their own materials on the Internet. So you could effectively say that a situation is arising where a great deal of the information from the parliamentary papers series is becoming available to all libraries through the Internet.

We have, if you like, a de facto broadened library deposit scheme, but what is missing is any sort of centralised coordination, the Internet equivalent of the indexing of the parliamentary papers series. So although a lot of this information is now becoming very broadly available, there is as yet no centralised service where you can identify what information is available and what its place in context is in Australia. That is very much the focus of our plans and developments for the near future.

CHAIR—Thank you. I have one last question for Mr Godfrey before I pass to my colleagues. Basically, what has been sold and what is left?

Mr Godfrey—Quickly, all 'putting ink on paper' has been sold. All policy standards and community service obligations remain. We have finalised passport production—that is now with the new owners. On 3 October, core printing will be transferred to the Canberra printers. The balance of the instant print and copy centres will be finalised by the end of September. So by October we will have sold what I would call the majority of the production side.

That would leave us with standard information policy as the remaining role for the

Australian Government Publishing Service. That will include the bookshops, and we probably will retain those for the foreseeable future. They were market tested, but we did not come up with any satisfactory solution. We will be deferring any action on that for at least another 12 months. Information services will continue to be provided by the new division of DAS which will encompass the old remains of the Australian Government Publishing Service.

Mr LIEBERMAN—I have a question for Mr Godfrey, for the government: in view of all the events that have occurred and the reports you have given us of the changes, does the department consider that the committee should have any matters brought to its attention now that it needs to consider having regard to its terms of reference?

Mr Godfrey—In my view, no, there are no matters that need to be brought to the committee, other than the minor matter that Mr Mullins mentioned a while ago—that is, that we will have to explore storage and some of the flow-on costs. But that may be an issue that we will address in the next week or so when we look at where the remaining elements of the Australian Government Publishing Service are located. It is our intention to move out of the Kingston premises, but we do have other premises available to the department in Canberra. We may be able to continue to provide some of those services on a free basis to the Parliament.

Mr LIEBERMAN—So there is a potential cost that has not been resolved? Is that what you are saying?

Mr Godfrey—That is correct.

Mr LIEBERMAN—How long before you will resolve that particular issue?

Mr Godfrey—We believe we can have all that resolved by the end of September.

Senator McKIERNAN—What income generating businesses, if any, will remain within AGPS?

Mr Godfrey—I think the major one is information services through the bookshops, but there also is an ability for us to charge for some of the services provided to other agencies in information development, access and standards. But I would have to say, in looking at the overall balance sheet for AGPS in previous years, the majority of the revenue generating has been sold.

Senator McKIERNAN—Have you any projections as to what future revenues will be generated and in what divisions? What I am really looking for, I suppose, is a budget statement. Perhaps before you answer that, I am not sure whether it was you or Mr Mullins who mentioned a revised AGPS charter but has the committee received the revised AGPS charter as yet?

Mr Mullins—No. The revision of the charter commenced at this time last year but was put on hold pending the completion of the market testing process. We intend to submit a revised charter to the committee by the end of this year.

Senator McKIERNAN—So you do not, as yet, have a revised AGPS charter?

Mr Mullins—We have a draft of a revised charter.

Senator McKIERNAN—Has AGPS, DAS or the Minister sought the views of this committee on what the content of that charter ought to be?

Mr Mullins—Not yet. It is our intention to seek the views of this committee, and of course of the Presiding Officers, as to the contents of the charter. The only reason it has not been submitted is the completion of the market testing process so that we were sure of what we were continuing to do and how we would continue to do it. That has now become quite clear and we will be able to do that in the next month or so.

Senator McKIERNAN—But you have been developing this draft for 12 months or so, haven't you?

Mr Mullins—Yes, but we have not done any work on it for some time. It is mainly to convert the *charter of printing and publishing responsibilities* into a *Commonwealth charter of public information responsibilities* to take account of the fact that departments will not be tied to AGPS for publishing, but also to take account of the developments in the electronic publishing area. The prime purpose of the charter is to meet the needs of Parliament for its printing and publishing. That will be the principal focus of it as AGPS can act as an agent of the Parliament in ensuring that its information is properly distributed and made available.

Dr Joye—The charter itself has had to be linked in with the IMSC report and that report was only finalised last week and was being printed last week. That was another reason for the delay.

Senator McKIERNAN—It is interesting to compare those responses to the earlier response to the question Mr Lieberman asked with regard to the functioning of this committee and our responsibilities. We do have some responsibilities on us in this regard but so far we have not been consulted on it. Mr Godfrey, did I hear you say earlier that the AGPS logo had been sold?

Mr Godfrey—That is correct. The logo has been sold and the name AGPS is subject to negotiation of whether they wish to purchase AGPS.

Senator McKIERNAN—The front page story in yesterday's *Canberra Times*—I guess you would have seen it—which is headed 'Printers' rags to riches tale' makes no

mention of where AGPS as an organisation, as an identity, will be placed in the future. It is not mentioned, incidentally, in the Minister's statement of 27 August either.

Mr Godfrey—I think we just have to put those two documents in context. Firstly, the Minister's press release of 27 August was an interim holding release because we believed the decision had been made public and we wanted to provide information to people on what the decision was in view of the history of this market testing. Secondly, the article in the *Canberra Times* was written by a reporter and not by the department and therefore we did not have a contribution to it. There will be—

Senator McKIERNAN—You are quoted in it.

Mr Godfrey—Yes—one sentence. Following my negotiations at 1 o'clock and midnight today with staff, a full description of the ongoing role of Australian Government Publishing Service within the new divisional structure will be given. That will be made available for implementation, as I indicated, around the first week of October.

I believe that AGPS does have a full understanding of the role of this committee, but the market testing has been lengthy and detailed. It started in last year's budget. We went to the market in November of 1996 and then went out to formal tender on 7 April this year.

Until last week, I think it is quite reasonable for the people in AGPS who have not been involved in the market testing process to have been unaware of what would have been included as a result of the outcomes. Until we finalise the sale of the core printing, I would have to say that I am not 100 per cent sure myself what will be left in the remaining information services group. But it has been a detailed process. It was not a straight sale where we defined up front what was to be sold. The government decision was to market test and therefore we had to see what options were available in the marketplace.

Preparation of a charter based on an unknown has been difficult but I think they will now start the consultative process, seeing we made those announcements of 27 August.

Senator McKIERNAN—I have a little bit of difficulty understanding the market testing concept. My understanding of market testing is that you go out and find out where it is and then you know where things are. But with front pages like this, where we are now called into the process at the conclusion—not only of the market testing but of the restructuring at the conclusion of the sales—it has gone way beyond market testing, in my understanding of the concept. But I guess that is something I have to come to grips with. I guess it would be a lot easier for my colleagues in government to understand that particular concept.

Mr Godfrey—I think it is a difficult concept, and when is it market testing and when does it move into sale processes? As a person who has made the decisions, I have to

say it is very difficult to do that.

At the end of last year, we went out to see what was available in the market that would reasonably be able to satisfy in terms of value for money, specifications and standards. I did mention that we did not receive, in our view, any satisfactory responses from our bookshop network, and I do not think we received satisfactory responses from some of the other minor elements. But, in the major production areas, we were of the view—following the assessment of the market last year—that there were people who could conduct that and would provide no risk outcomes to AGPS; people who would still have the responsibility for a large number of the areas, or for the departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives, who will be required to use the tenderer until 30 June 1998.

It is difficult to say where the cut-off point was from market testing to sale. In terms of the restructuring, that is basically beginning now, with negotiations with staff commencing today. Staff were only advised of the broad structure and parameters for the new AGPS on Friday, in a staff notice. I expect, therefore, that during this week and the following weeks towards the end of September there will be very detailed discussions of that. We do not have a bottom line or a direction, other than that we wish to continue to provide the services of policy, standards and access. We have to now fit a structure into line to provide those services.

Senator McKIERNAN—I think I am the one who has difficulty with the concept. I would have started developing the charter in the first instance, and then the mission statement. I would market test and see how the market testing would be able to fulfil those mission statements and charter. That is the way I would have done it but maybe that logic comes from my birthright, having been born in Ireland. We do have a tendency towards a logical transition to things. I know there is some Irish influence in Australia, but maybe it is not all the way there.

I have a final question. The newspaper article yesterday refers to an industry of about \$60 million and an employee base of 2,000. Earlier in the article it talks about 120 workers at the printing office at Kingston who had already received redundancy notices. How accurate are the comments in that article? I appreciate what you said earlier about it being a journalist who wrote it, so I give you the opportunity of telling us what the accurate figures are.

Mr Godfrey—I think if we look at the amount of printing work that was undertaken by AGPS, including brokerage work, then the \$60 million is a reasonable estimate—probably slightly lower than what has actually transpired over the previous years, although last year printing was down as a result of changes in government policy. Whether there are 2,000 workers in the industry, I am not aware. Clearly, if that is the situation they represent about 1,600 beyond AGPS.

Notices have been issued to staff today in the core and general printing areas and

the Information Services Group. I was not aware of the exact number of those, but it would be around 129 to 143. I did not get a list before I came, because the list was still being prepared so that they could go out to staff at the same time as Dr Joye and I speak to staff at 1 o'clock today. There will be further notices issued this week and next week as a result of the other parts of the sale process, on instant print and copy centres, and the balance of the restructuring. Those notices issued today take effect from 3 October, and the others will take effect from a date to be specified. Some will be in the last week of September, but most will be some time in October.

Senator McKIERNAN—So the 129 mentioned here were not actually issued when this story was printed.

Mr Godfrey—In the staff bulletin that was put out on Friday there was an indication that we would be issuing those notices. I think that number just reflects the number of people working in the area rather than the fact that they had all received their notices.

Senator McKIERNAN—In the transition period from the current owners, the AGPS, to the new joint company, will those individuals be applying for their jobs, as it were?

Mr Godfrey—The process that we have agreed with staff on is the clean break approach. On the day of the transfer we will pay staff their entitlements. If they seek employment with the new owner on the following day, then that is a matter for individual staff and the new owners concerned. We will be applying the clean break principle. They will be paid out as Commonwealth employees at midnight on the date before the completion. I would expect that many of them will start with the new owner the following day on new terms and conditions.

Senator McKIERNAN—That clean break would involve accrued salary or wages, as the case may be, accrued annual leave, long service leave and sick leave?

Mr Godfrey—And redundancy payments. There will be no sick leave payout.

Senator McKIERNAN—There will be a redundancy payment, though.

Mr Godfrey—The Department of Administrative Services has a staff redundancy arrangement which is slightly different to that applying to the broader public sector. That arrangement provides for people who want to take a voluntary redundancy to receive all of the accrued entitlements plus two weeks pay for each one year of service up to a maximum of 48 weeks. If they do not wish to take a payout then we have a staff redeployment unit, and we meet the costs for the ongoing six months in trying to retrain those people and find them employment. We utilise outside agencies in attempting to get those people redeployment.

There is a separate arrangement for DAS in view of the major downsizing that has occurred. We negotiated a specific relationship for redundancy staff redeployment within DAS with the former government and the unions. That relationship expires at the end of this calendar year except for those businesses being sold as a result of the 1996-97 budget which expires then on 31 December 1998. Then it would revert to normal provisions.

Senator McKIERNAN—Do you have a budget figure for redundancies just for the printing division of AGPS?

Mr Godfrey—No. We have not at this stage specified a budget figure. We have agreed to provide the legislation committee details of that as a result of the Senate estimates process, and we would be happy to provide that information to this committee.

I do not believe that we will be in a position until the early part of October to have an exact estimate. We have an agreement with the Department of Finance and the government to meet these costs and we have been provided with some funds. Whether those funds are sufficient we are not yet sure, but we believe that all staff made surplus as a result of this market testing process will be offered the opportunity of a clean break, or the staff redeployment option.

CHAIR—Thank you. Following on from one of Senator McKiernan's questions, when he was talking about the possible areas of remuneration or revenue raising for what remains of the AGPS: will the provision of print brokering still be available to the AGPS?

Mr Godfrey—No. Print brokerage is not to be performed by AGPS. However, if an agency or the Parliament requires assistance in developing a process, that policy standard will be available. The actual print brokerage is a part of the sale process.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—I have a question following on from Senator McKiernan's question to do with the sale of AGPS. Did I hear you right when you said that you had an employee bulletin go out on Friday suggesting that there were going to be redundancies? This article appeared on Sunday saying that there would be redundancies and that the management would talk to employees today. Is that the process?

Mr Godfrey—I think the process goes well beyond that. I think that the announcements made in August last year indicated that where a DAS business was to be sold, or market tested, we had a provision in place for surplus staff or redundancies. We have provided counselling for all people in AGPS in terms of their entitlements and rights, depending on the date of the decision. I think that all staff are aware of the process. The notices went out on Friday because that was the first day that we could do it following the completion and signing of an agreement with the consortium. I do not think it is any surprise to any staff members because they have gone to counselling and information sessions on the basis that the sale process would be concluded.

The real issue was who the new owners were going to be and what the date of the sale was, rather than the surplus staff process. They have been aware of that, I think, from discussions with management and the information sessions from as early as 7 April when we made the decision to formally go out to tender for sale and market testing.

Mr RICHARD EVANS—Have they been aware of the actual numbers of surplus staff?

Mr Godfrey—I think that those in the areas that were defined in the tender were aware that all of the functions were being put to tender and that, therefore, all of their jobs would be declared surplus. Those who have not received their notices as yet are the ones who would not have been aware of their exact future role. That is why they have not gone out because we want to have further discussions with them in terms of the process and the new structure. Clearly those within the Government Printing Office—the editorial area and the instant print and copy centres—were well aware that once their function was sold, their jobs would be declared surplus.

CHAIRMAN—Colleagues, Mr Godfrey, Dr Joye, Mr Mullins and Mr Gregson, thank you very much indeed. I now declare the meeting closed.

Committee adjourned at 10.25 a.m.