

Electronic distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series

Background

- 4.1 The Committee has previously considered the issue of providing the Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS) in alternative formats.
- 4.2 In its 1986 review of the costs and distribution of the series, the Committee looked at the possible use of new technologies in the production of documents for presentation. The Committee did not endorse the wide-scale use of alternatives to hard copy, however it recommended that alternative technology may be used for material that is not required to be read with the body of a report.¹
- 4.3 In 1997, the Committee presented a report on the future of the PPS in response to a proposal from the Presiding Officers to abolish the series. The Committee then recommended that the PPS “should continue in its present form until there is a viable replacement either in electronic or printed form (or both)”, and that agencies “should publish their documents electronically as well as in print”.²
- 4.4 In their letter to the Committee of 12 May 2005, the Presiding Officers cited the “increasing electronic availability of the documents in the

1 Joint Committee on Publications, *Review of the Cost and Distribution of the Parliamentary Paper Series*, Canberra, 1986, pp. 19-20.

2 Joint Committee on Publications, *Future of the Parliamentary Papers Series*. Department of the Senate, Canberra, 1997, p. iii.

PPS” as the basis for restricting the eligibility guidelines for the series. The Presiding Officers also asked the Committee to provide their views on distributing the Parliamentary Papers Series in a digital format, whether as an alternative or an adjunct to the hard copy series.

- 4.5 Developments since the Committee’s last report in 1997, such as the closure of the Government Bookshop Network and the introduction of the publications.gov.au website indicate that it is now timely to reconsider the provision of the Parliamentary Papers Series in an electronic format.

The current situation

- 4.6 There is no doubt that government information is more accessible electronically than was the case in 1997. The Committee received evidence that most agencies do comply with their obligations to publish documents online.³ As an example, all Parliamentary committee reports are available electronically upon presentation, with some dating back to 1996.⁴
- 4.7 Despite most government publications being available online, an electronic version of the PPS does not currently exist. The individual documents which make up the series are placed on agency websites but are not identified as belonging to the series.⁵
- 4.8 There is no doubt that the establishment of an electronic PPS would be widely supported.⁶

3 Ms Pamela Gatenby, National Library of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 13; Ms Jennefer Nicholson, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 21.

4 Mr Harry Evans, Department of the Senate, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 2; Ms Robyn McClelland, Department of the House of Representatives, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 11.

5 Australian Library and Information Association, *Submission 6*, p. 6; Australian Government Libraries Information Network, *Submission 4*, p. 3.

6 New South Wales Parliamentary Library, *Submission 13*, p. 1; Ms Roslynn Membrey, Department of Parliamentary Services (Commonwealth), *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 16.

Benefits of an electronic Parliamentary Papers Series

- 4.9 The benefits that an electronic version of the PPS could deliver include:
- more immediate and wider access to the series. The delays in providing hard copy Parliamentary Papers⁷ could be largely avoided by electronic distribution,⁸ and more users could access the PPS through home and local library internet connections;⁹
 - increasing flexibility to search for information;¹⁰ and
 - long term cost effectiveness.¹¹ An electronic PPS could reduce demand for hard copies¹² and prevent the time consuming and inefficient practice of libraries creating their own digital repository of major reports.¹³

An alternative or adjunct to hard copies?

- 4.10 There is widespread support for an electronic version of the PPS as an adjunct, rather than as an alternative, to hard copy.¹⁴
- 4.11 The Australian Library and Information Association suggested that electronic versions of the PPS could eventually replace blister pack copies but the completeness of the series in both the short and long term would need to be assured before libraries would accept the change.¹⁵

7 Department of the House of Representatives, *Submission 16*, p. 9.

8 Ms Jennefer Nicholson, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 26.

9 Australian National Audit Office, *Submission 15*, p. 1.

10 Dr Stephen Ellis, National Archives of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 10.

11 Department of Parliamentary Services (Commonwealth), *Submission 11*, p. 2.

12 Ms Roxanne Missingham, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 26.

13 Ms Gaik Khong, Department of Parliamentary Services (Commonwealth), *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 19.

14 For example, National Archives of Australia, *Submission 10*, p. 4; Parliamentary Library of Western Australia, *Submission 12*, p. 2.

15 Ms Roxanne Missingham, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 28.

Availability of electronic publications

- 4.12 In 1997 the Committee recommended that agencies producing parliament papers should do so electronically as well as in hard copy, and that where an electronic version was not produced, the reasons for this should be advised to the relevant Minister in the letter of transmittal of the document. This would have raised the issue of non-availability of an electronic version of the document at the ministerial level, but it appears that this recommendation was not implemented.¹⁶

Requirements for the online publication of government information

- 4.13 The Online Information Service Obligations (OISOs) developed as part of the *Government Online* strategy in 2000, stipulate that once documents are presented to Parliament they are required to be published online.¹⁷
- 4.14 As with the supply of hard copies for distribution, a small minority of agencies, estimated at 10 percent, are currently not meeting their obligations.¹⁸
- 4.15 The Committee agrees with AGIMO that this non-compliance is seldom deliberate,¹⁹ but more needs to be done to ensure that all agencies comply with their obligations to make their publications available electronically. Until this occurs, hard copies will always be seen as more reliable than electronic copies.

Responsibility for monitoring online publishing

- 4.16 The Committee is concerned that no single agency appears to have taken a role in monitoring and ensuring that all appropriate government information is published online, as required under the OISOs.

16 Joint Committee on Publications, *Future of the Parliamentary Papers Series*, Canberra, 1997, p. iii; Ms Robyn McClelland, Department of the House of Representatives, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 11.

17 Australian Government Information Management Office, *Submission 18*, p. 1; see also <http://www.agimo.gov.au/information/oiso>.

18 Ms Pamela Gatenby, National Library of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 13.

19 Mr Patrick Callioni, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 4.

- 4.17 The Committee heard that it is the responsibility of the Australian Government Management Office (AGIMO) to monitor agency compliance with the OISOs.²⁰
- 4.18 AGIMO agreed that they have a responsibility to ensure that standards are applied and identify and remedy shortcomings. The web guides for agencies that they have developed, which set out the rules, standards and expectations for online publication of government information, give them the capacity to review and influence the behaviour of agencies.²¹
- 4.19 At present, AGIMO does not have a mechanism to identify material required to be published online but not placed online by agencies. However they are hopeful that future technology would assist them in this regard.²²
- 4.20 The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) was nominated by AGIMO as the appropriate body to monitor agency performance. AGIMO stated that they work closely with the ANAO to ensure that the standards such as the OISOs are included in their regular audit programs.²³
- 4.21 The Clerk of the House of Representatives referred to the effectiveness of adverse audit comments in focussing attention on requirements.²⁴ Given that there is little evidence to suggest that non-compliance with their obligations is deliberate, the prevention of adverse comments from the ANAO would be more likely to focus the attention of agencies towards ensuring that all of their publications are published online.

20 Mr Ian Harris, Department of the House of Representatives, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 11; Ms Roxanne Missingham, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 29.

21 Mr Patrick Callioni, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 2, 8; see also <http://www.agimo.gov.au/webguide>.

22 Mr Peter Alexander, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 7; Mr John Lalor, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 7.

23 Mr Patrick Callioni, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 3.

24 Mr Ian Harris, Department of the House of Representatives, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 14.

Recommendation 12

- 4.22 **The Committee recommends that the Australian National Audit Office regularly monitor the online availability of government documents, especially those presented to Parliament.**

Recommendation 13

- 4.23 **The Committee recommends that the Australian Government Information Management Office continue to work with agencies to ensure that all government documents are made available online.**

Long term availability

- 4.24 While agencies are required to place all presented documents online, there does not appear to be any obligation to retain online access to older publications. Material can be, and is, removed from agency websites,²⁵ despite the Australian Government Information Management Office stating that this should not happen.²⁶
- 4.25 Changes to Uniform Resource Locators (URLs), used to locate online publications also cause major problems for libraries and researchers. This phenomenon is colloquially known as 'link rot', and can occur when agencies move publications, often into the archival areas of their website or when an agency changes its name.²⁷
- 4.26 Persistent identifiers, which allow information to be found regardless of its location on a website, would address this problem, but this is practice is not widely used by government.²⁸

25 Dr Stephen Ellis, National Archives of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 15.

26 Mr Patrick Callioni, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 2.

27 Department of Parliamentary Services (Commonwealth), *Submission 11*, p. 2; Ms Janet Smith, Australian Government Libraries and Information Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 8.

28 Ms Pamela Gatenby, National Library of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, pp. 11-13; Mr Harry Evans, Department of the Senate, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 6.

Recommendation 14

- 4.27 **The Committee recommends that the Australian Government Information Management Office take steps to ensure that documents presented to Parliament are permanently available online, including encouraging the use of persistent identifiers to online information.**

Technological barriers

- 4.28 Several technological barriers exist which prevent the community accessing an electronic version of the Parliamentary Papers Series.
- 4.29 It is estimated that 53% of Australian household have Internet access and delivery of services by electronic means can be problematic in regional and remote areas.²⁹ Many Australians also lack the necessary skills to effectively access online information.³⁰ Large electronic documents can be time consuming to download, difficult to read online, and costly to print out.³¹
- 4.30 Library resources for accessing electronic material can also be limited. Since the closure of the Bookshops, libraries now have a greater role in providing public access to government publications³² and many public libraries are reporting an increased use of government websites, both for transactions and information.³³ According to the Australian Library and Information Association, government websites account for up to 10% of electronic data accessed by the public at libraries.³⁴ The State Library of New South Wales reported that the PPS is referred to daily.³⁵
- 4.31 Even within government, universal access to the internet for staff is not guaranteed. In these cases, staff must access hard copies of

29 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Household use of information technology*, Canberra, 2004, p. 5; State Library of Queensland, *Submission 8*, p. 1.

30 State Library of Victoria, *Submission 2*, p. 2; Ms Pamela Gatenby, National Library of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 11.

31 Ms Pamela Gatenby, National Library of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 11.

32 State Library of Queensland, *Submission 8*, p. 1.

33 Gillian Savage, NSW Public Library Network Research Committee, *Public Libraries + eGovernment 2004*, see <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/pln/projects/summary.pdf>.

34 Ms Jennefer Nicholson, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 21.

35 State Library of New South Wales, *Submission 3*, p. 1.

parliamentary papers, either held by a departmental library or obtained through an inter-library loan.³⁶

- 4.32 Constant changes in the technology used to generate and read electronic publications have also proven a barrier to relying on digitised versions of documents.³⁷ The need to keep up to date with technology, so that documents can still be read in the future is a major consideration.³⁸
- 4.33 The Committee shares concerns about the longevity of storing information on CD-ROM. Depending on its quality, the life of a CD-ROM can be as short as twelve months,³⁹ which may be a solution for the immediate distribution of the PPS, but is not a viable long-term alternative to hard copy.
- 4.34 The National Archives of Australia have avoided tying their digital preservation strategy to a specific technology, enabling them to reproduce the information at a later date regardless of format.⁴⁰ This strategy should be employed for the digital provision of the PPS, to avoid the situation where an application is not backwards compatible, i.e. older information is unable to be read by newer versions of software.⁴¹
- 4.35 The Committee heard that a lot of work in the areas of architecture and searchability is required before digital versions could replace hard copies,⁴² which are currently seen as primarily used for long term preservation and access.⁴³

36 Australian Government Libraries and Information Network, *Submission 4*, p. 3; Ms Kym Holden, Australian Government Libraries and Information Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 7.

37 Mr Harry Evans, Department of the Senate, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 3.

38 Parliamentary Library of Western Australia, *Submission 12*, p. 2; Mr Patrick Callioni, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 5.

39 Mr Ian Harris, Department of the House of Representatives, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 14; Dr Stephen Ellis, National Archives of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 11.

40 Dr Stephen Ellis, National Archives of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 11.

41 Department of Education, Science and Training, *Submission 17*, p. 2.

42 Miss Roslynn Membrey, Commonwealth Department of Parliamentary Services, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 16.

43 Mr Harry Evans, Department of the Senate, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 6.

- 4.36 With many issues yet to be satisfactorily addressed or resolved, the Committee cannot recommend that the Parliamentary Papers Series be available solely in a digitised form.

Recommendation 15

- 4.37 **The Committee recommends that any digital versions of the Parliamentary Papers Series augment the hard copy series.**

Options for electronic distribution

- 4.38 The Committee is keen to see the “comprehensive, certain and effective system of providing government information” sought by the majority of submission being applied to the Parliamentary Papers Series.⁴⁴
- 4.39 The State Library of Western Australia and others suggested that the “PPS should be available digitally via the Internet”.⁴⁵ The Committee agrees, because of the limitations of storage media mentioned in paragraph 4.33.
- 4.40 There are several options available which need to be carefully considered, possibly in consultation with stakeholders before a decision on a delivery mechanism is made.

Delivery via the Publications.gov.au website

- 4.41 The publications.gov.au website, administered by AGIMO, was developed following the closure of the Government Bookshop Network (Bookshops) in October 2003. The decision to close the Bookshops was announced in the 2003-2004 Budget, and was made as a result of declining sales and the use of alternative distribution methods by agencies.⁴⁶
- 4.42 The publications.gov.au website contains links to government publications on agency websites, along with details on how to obtain

44 Department of Parliamentary Services (Victoria), *Submission 9*, p. 1.

45 State Library of Western Australia, *Submission 19*, p. 2.

46 Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Portfolio, *Portfolio Budget Statements 2003-04*, Budget Related Paper No. 1.3, pp. 513-4.

publications that were previously available through the Bookshops.⁴⁷ Documents comprising the Parliamentary Papers Series, which are a subset of all government publications presented to Parliament, are also available on the website.

- 4.43 The website is in great demand as a portal to government information. Use of the website is steadily increasing, up 40 percent since its launch in July 2004 and still growing.⁴⁸
- 4.44 The publications.gov.au website is only as good as the information published online by agencies. While there are an increasing number of reports available online via the website, not all are available.⁴⁹
- 4.45 The Committee has addressed these issues earlier in this chapter and the implementation of recommendation 8 would assist in this regard.

Parliamentary notification of online publishing

- 4.46 The Commonwealth Department of Parliamentary Services suggested that agencies should be encouraged to include the Internet address of each publication in the catalogue records contributed to the Libraries Australia bibliographic database, as well as in the publication itself.
- 4.47 The Committee would encourage this move, as it would enable the publication to be found more easily online, however problems would arise if the Internet address changed for whatever reason.
- 4.48 The Department of the Senate requires that agencies presenting a document out of sitting also provide a link to the document on the agency website. This link is then distributed by email to Senators and Members.⁵⁰
- 4.49 The requirement to provide a link to a document on an agency's website should be extended for all documents presented to Parliament. The link would be provided to the Tabling Officer of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and should be listed as a requirement for presentation in the *Guidelines for the Presentation of*

47 Mr Patrick Callioni, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 1.

48 Mr Patrick Callioni, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 2.

49 Mr Patrick Callioni, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 2.

50 Ms Rosa Ferranda, Department of the Senate, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 6.

*Government Documents, Government Responses, Ministerial Statements & Other Instruments to the Parliament.*⁵¹

- 4.50 The link would then be included on the daily list of documents to be presented to Parliament, circulated to Members and Senators. It could also be included in other documents or databases as a resource to access these documents online.
- 4.51 The lack of a link on the list of documents would draw attention, at least within Parliament, to the fact that the agency is not publishing the document online. This will also alert agencies such as AGIMO and the ANAO to monitor agency compliance with the OISOs. They can then assist agencies to publish all presented documents online.
- 4.52 Greater liaison between the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Tabling Officer and agencies is required to ensure that the documents are not released on the website prior to their presentation. The Committee feels that this will not be too onerous a burden on the parties involved.

Recommendation 16

- 4.53 **The Committee recommends that agencies provide a website link, for all documents to be presented to Parliament, to the Tabling Officer of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. This link is to be included in the daily list of documents scheduled for presentation to Parliament, which is circulated to Members and Senators.**

Hyperlinked list of Parliamentary papers

- 4.54 Several submissions cited the need of a list of parliamentary papers to be available electronically.⁵² The Committee heard evidence that this has already been implemented⁵³ and would welcome further

51 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. See http://www.dpmc.gov.au/guidelines/docs/guidelines_govt_docs.pdf.

52 Australian Government Libraries Information Network, *Submission 4*, p. 3; Ms Jennefer Nicholson, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 26.

53 Ms Gaik Khong, Department of Parliamentary Services (Commonwealth), *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 17; Mr Peter Alexander, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 7.

developments in this area, such as providing hyperlinks in these lists to the electronic versions of the documents.⁵⁴

- 4.55 Such a list would be a very good short term solution to make the PPS accessible online, but would be subject to the same problems as delivery via the publications.gov.au website.

Recommendation 17

- 4.56 **The Committee recommends that the chamber departments investigate providing an online list of Parliamentary Papers with hyperlinks to those documents on agency websites.**

A digital repository

- 4.57 Several submissions to the inquiry maintained that the Parliamentary Papers Series needs to be contained in a single database, on a fully searchable website.⁵⁵ This would be an efficient method of storing the PPS and would ensure the long term availability of the documents.⁵⁶
- 4.58 The Australian Library and Information Association suggested that such a repository could enable agencies to upload their report into the system.⁵⁷ There would, however, still be a need for input by the chamber departments to identify each document and link it to its parliamentary paper number.⁵⁸

National Library

- 4.59 The National Library of Australia offered to store an electronic PPS through its PANDORA web archive. The Library stated that it already has developed the knowledge and architecture to undertake the

54 State Library of Queensland, *Submission 8*, p. 1; Mr Peter Alexander, Australian Government Information Management Office, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, p. 7.

55 Australian Library and Information Association, *Submission 6*, p. 7; Australian National Audit Office, *Submission 15*, p. 2; Miss Roslynn Membrey, Department of Parliamentary Services (Commonwealth), *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 18.

56 Ms Roxanne Missingham, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 23.

57 Australian Library and Information Association, *Submission 6*, p. 7.

58 Ms Penny Scott, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 27.

project although additional funding would be required to expand the PANDORA archive.⁵⁹

- 4.60 The Australian Library and Information Association supported this proposal, recommending that existing infrastructure be used to host a digital version of the PPS.⁶⁰ The suggestion was also supported by the National Archives of Australia, who stated that the National Library is responsible for ensuring access to publications.⁶¹
- 4.61 The Clerk of the Senate indicated that he would be happy for the National Library to host the digital version of the PPS, provided they can find the funding.⁶² The National Library estimate the cost of hosting the PPS repository would be in the order of \$200,000.⁶³
- 4.62 In 1997, the Committee recommended that administration of the series should be continued to be the responsibility of the Department of the House of Representatives, assisted by the Department of the Senate.⁶⁴ The Committee maintains this view and considers that responsibility for both the hard copy and digital versions of the series should be held by Parliament.
- 4.63 The Committee has no objection to the National Library hosting a digital repository containing Parliamentary Papers. However, any developments in this area should be done in consultation with the Chamber departments.
- 4.64 Under the *Copyright Act 1968*, hard copy publications are legally required to be deposited with the National Library. The Committee heard that an amendment to the Copyright Act to extend the legal deposit requirement to electronic publications would improve the ability of the National Library to collect and provide access to the publications they store on the PANDORA web archive.⁶⁵

59 National Library of Australia, *Submission 14*, p. 1; Ms Pamela Gatenby, National Library of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 11.

60 Ms Jennefer Nicholson, Australian Library and Information Association, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 25.

61 Dr Stephen Ellis, National Archives of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 28 November 2005, pp. 14-15.

62 Mr Harry Evans, Department of the Senate, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 2.

63 Ms Pamela Gatenby, National Library of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 14.

64 Joint Committee on Publications, *Future of the Parliamentary Papers Series*, Canberra, 1997, p. iv.

65 Ms Pamela Gatenby, National Library of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 15.

Recommendation 18

- 4.65 **The Committee recommends that the legal deposit provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968* be extended to include electronic copies of documents.**

Within Parliament

- 4.66 One suggestion for the location of a central repository of the PPS is within the website of the federal Parliament.⁶⁶ This makes some sense, as the administration for the series is shared by the Departments of the Senate and House of Representatives, and the Parliamentary website would most likely be the first port of call for those searching for documents presented to Parliament.
- 4.67 The Department of the House of Representatives has indicated that they would not be inclined to establish such a repository because of the lack of evidence of demand.⁶⁷ The Committee has no doubt that once established a permanent digital repository of parliamentary papers would be widely used by both libraries and the community.
- 4.68 The initial set up costs of a new repository may be more expensive than to utilise an existing one. Despite the lack of a definitive indication of the costs, and the reluctance of the Department of the House of Representatives to provide the PPS digitally, the Committee's preferred option is for the Chamber departments to develop a new digital repository for the Parliamentary Papers Series.

Recommendation 19

- 4.69 **The Committee recommends that the Department of the House of Representatives and the Department of the Senate, in consultation with the Australian Government Information Management Office and other stakeholders, investigate and implement the development of an online digital repository for the Parliamentary Papers Series.**

66 State Library of New South Wales, *Submission 3*, p. 2; Ms Kym Holden, Australian Government Libraries and Information Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 31 October 2005, p. 6.

67 Department of the House of Representatives, *Submission 16*, p. 11.

- 4.70 An alternative to setting up a new repository, or as an interim measure until such a repository is developed, would be to utilise the Department of the Senate's digital imaging project. This project initially involved generating microfilm images of all documents presented to the Senate since 1901 and has now moved to digitising these images. The digital images are then expected to be made available through a web-based repository.⁶⁸
- 4.71 The Committee sees this as a possible solution for an electronic PPS, however only documents that have been presented to the Senate are digitally imaged.
- 4.72 House of Representatives committee reports and the Department of the House of Representatives annual reports are not included in the Department of the Senate's project, although from 1996 onwards they are available online elsewhere. The Committee would encourage the House of Representatives to make available digital images of earlier committee reports to ensure a complete set of documents tabled in both Houses.

Recommendation 20

- 4.73 **The Committee recommends that, to complement the Department of the Senate's digital imaging project, the Department of the House of Representatives investigate the digital imaging of House committee reports presented from 1901 to 1996 and making these available online.**

68 Department of the Senate, Annual Report 2004-05, Canberra, 2005, p. 36; Mr Harry Evans, Department of the Senate, *Transcript of evidence*, 7 November 2005, p. 3.