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The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

# Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series

Joint Committee on Publications

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Canberra

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## Foreword

The Parliamentary Papers Series does not contain all documents presented to Parliament; however the significant documents that comprise the series provide vital information on the activities of government and the Parliament since Federation.

Advances in technology have resulted in a move towards the publication of electronic documents rather than the traditional hard copy reports. While electronic distribution may provide great opportunities for widening the access to the series, long-term availability to these documents is not yet assured. A framework is required to ensure that the series is permanently available, both in hard copy and in electronic forms, to the widest possible audience.

While costs are seen to have an impact on the distribution of parliamentary papers, the Committee feels that, due to the historical significance of the Parliamentary Papers Series, it is important that it continue to be available.

The Committee feels that the recommendations contained in this report provide a foundation on which the Parliamentary Papers Series can continue to be available to the widest possible audience.

Mrs Trish Draper MP  
Chair



## Membership of the Committee

Chair Mrs Trish Draper MP

Deputy Chair Senator John Watson

Members	Mr Dick Adams MP	Senator Steve Hutchins (to 1/7/05)
	Mr Mark Baker MP	Senator David Johnston
	Mr Bob Baldwin MP (to 28/2/06)	Senator Linda Kirk (to 1/7/05)
	Ms Ann Corcoran MP	Senator Gavin Marshall
	Mr Chris Hayes MP (from 16/6/05)	Senator Clare Moore (to 1/7/05)
	Mrs Kay Hull MP	Senator Fiona Nash (from 16/8/05)
	Mr Michael Johnson (from 28/2/06)	Senator Helen Polley (from 1/7/05)
	Mr Roger Price MP (to 16/6/05)	Senator Nigel Scullion (to 16/8/05)
		Senator Glenn Sterle (from 1/7/05)
		Senator Dana Wortley (from 1/7/05)

## Committee Secretariat

Secretary Mr Jason Sherd

Papers Manager Ms Vicki Bradley



## Terms of reference

To inquire and report on the distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS), with particular reference to:

- The potential impact of changes to the distribution of the PPS made by the Presiding Officers, namely the tightening of eligibility guidelines and the cessation of blister packs to commence on 1 January 2006;
- The provision of the PPS in a digital format, either as an alternative or an adjunct to the hard copy series;
- The feasibility of a subscription service, either in digital or hard copy form; and
- The possibility of partial or full cost recovery for the series.



## List of abbreviations

AGIMO	Australian Government Information Management Office
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
LDS	Library Deposit and Free Issue Schemes
OISOs	Online Information Service Obligations
PPS	Parliamentary Papers Series
URLs	Uniform Resource Locators





# List of recommendations

## 2 Changes to the eligibility guidelines

### Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the eligibility guidelines for the Parliamentary Papers Series be amended to include Commonwealth government departmental libraries.

### Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that recipients of the series be regularly surveyed to ascertain whether they wish to continue receiving Parliamentary Papers.

## 3 Methods of distributing hard copies of parliamentary papers

### Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the chamber departments:

- continue to monitor agency compliance with the requirements of the Parliamentary Papers Series; and
- report to the Committee, by 30 June the following year, any defaulting agencies.

### Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that, due to the costs passed on to recipient libraries being in excess of the savings realised by the chamber departments, blister packs of parliamentary papers continue to be available to eligible recipients.

### Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that recipients of the Parliamentary Papers series be surveyed to ascertain whether they wish to receive the series as loose pamphlet copies or as a blister pack.

### Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the guidelines for the provision of the Parliamentary Papers Series be amended to read as follows:

- that libraries of States, State Parliaments, tertiary education institutions, Commonwealth Departments, the main national or parliamentary library of a country which has an exchange with the National Library of Australia, and appropriate addressees as determined by the Presiding Officers, be entitled to be supplied, on request, with either:
  - ⇒ one free copy of each Parliamentary Paper; or
  - ⇒ one free collated set of the Parliamentary Papers Series.
- that trade, business, employer, employee, professional, commercial and similar organisations including members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and newspapers, be not entitled to receive free distribution of the above;

that the Presiding Officers advise current recipients on the free distribution list when the revised distribution scheme becomes operative, and instigate checks, from time to time as they consider necessary, to ascertain whether recipients desire to continue to receive their entitlement.

### Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government Information Management Office monitor agency compliance with the Library Deposit and Free Issue Schemes and provide a report, detailing defaulting agencies, to Parliament by no later than 30 June the following year.

### Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Tabling Officer of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet write to each recipient of the internal Parliament House document distribution to determine their stock requirements.

**Recommendation 9**

The Committee recommends that, where possible, any duplication between the Library Deposit and Free Issue Schemes and the Parliamentary Papers Series be eliminated.

**Recommendation 10**

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government Information Management Office, together with the Department of the House of Representatives and the Department of the Senate, investigate methods to reduce the duplication between the Library Deposit and Free Issue Schemes and the Parliamentary Papers Series. A report of their findings is to be supplied to the Committee within six months of the tabling of this report, and any changes implemented within a further six months.

**Recommendation 11**

The Committee recommends that the printing standards for documents presented to Parliament be strictly adhered to.

The Committee will monitor compliance with this recommendation and will regularly report to the Parliament those agencies not adhering to the standards.

**4 Electronic distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series****Recommendation 12**

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

**Recommendation 13**

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.

**Recommendation 14**

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.

#### Recommendation 15

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

#### Recommendation 16

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.

#### Recommendation 17

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

#### Recommendation 18

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

#### Recommendation 19

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.

#### Recommendation 20

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.

## 5 Cost recovery and subscriptions to the Parliamentary Papers Series

#### Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that any cost recovery measures are only applied to partially recover the administrative costs of the Chamber Departments.

#### **Recommendation 22**

The Committee recommends that all recipients of the series be offered additional copies of the series by subscription, in either pamphlet or blister pack. Organisations that previously received the series should be offered an opportunity to subscribe to the series.

#### **Recommendation 23**

The Committee recommends that the Chamber Departments set the price for a subscription to the Parliamentary Papers Series, and annually report to the Committee:

- The cost of a subscription to the series; and
- The organisations subscribing to the series.