



CSIRO Submission

Inquiry into printing standards for documents presented to Parliament

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Introduction

CSIRO, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, is Australia's national science agency. Its research aims to help create innovative and competitive industries, ensure the growth of a technologically advanced society and maintain healthy environments and lifestyles. In accordance with the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* (Schedule 1, Section 9), as a Commonwealth authority CSIRO must give its Annual Report to its responsible Government Minister for tabling in each House of Parliament. To the best of its ability, CSIRO endeavours to meet the Government's *Requirements for Annual Reports* (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2006; and has had no major problems adhering to them.

The purpose of this response is to provide the Joint Publications Committee with information based on CSIRO's experience in following the current printing standards for its Annual Reports. Responses to the individual Terms of Reference follow.

a) The necessity of the use of colour and illustrations within documents

The 2005-2006 CSIRO Annual Report is presented as an attachment to this submission and is also available at <http://www.csiro.au/annualreport>. CSIRO Annual Reports from 2000-2001 – 2004-2005 are also available on this site.

Based on CSIRO's experience preparing its Annual Reports:

- The current printing standards for use of colour and illustrations within documents meet our needs for presenting information and data on our activities in our Annual Reports.
- In accordance with the printing standards, we strictly limit our use of images and include only those that add value to the text. We do not use images for decorative purposes but find that using some images is very effective improving readability and clarifying information.

b) The cost of producing documents and whether value for money is being obtained

CSIRO has not incurred any additional Annual Report production costs by complying with current publication standards. To reduce the production costs of the 2005-2006 CSIRO Annual Report, CSIRO:

- Re-evaluated the contents of the report and omitted information that was non-essential to the reporting requirements;
- Included website addresses and links, where relevant, to avoid reproducing copious amounts of text and increasing page numbers;
- In accordance with CSIRO procurement policy guidelines, sought various quotes for design and printing services to compare costs and service standards;
- Reduced the number of printed copies by 50% (from the 2005 print run) and made electronic versions of the report available for downloading from the CSIRO website. In addition to lowering costs, an additional benefit of the electronic Annual Reports is increased public accessibility to the documents (for example, the electronic versions conform to the requirements for people with disabilities).
- Distributed hard copies of the 2005-2006 report only to major stakeholders. These included parliamentarians, senior government officials and Vice Chancellors of Universities. We direct requests from the general public and students for the Annual Report to the CSIRO website, as electronic copies are usually sufficient for the type of information that they require.

c) The feasibility of sanctions against organisations that do not follow the printing standards

The Committee may wish to consider that Agencies who comply with the current printing standards are, in CSIRO's experience, at a disadvantage when they apply for Annual Report awards such as the Institute of Public Administration Annual Report Awards and the Australasian Reporting Awards. One option could be for the committee to encourage agencies responsible for such awards to use compliance with the standards as an essential criterion.

The following comments address some of the *Options for Committee action*:

- **Issue new printing standards placing further restrictions in the use of colour and illustrations**

CSIRO supports the current printing standards. From our perspective, they are very clear in relation to specifications for colour and illustrations; and they enable us to present graphical and other data in an easy-to-understand way. Further restrictions to the standards may limit our ability to present graphical and other data comprehensibly.

Given that personnel constantly change, the Committee may wish to consider reminding agencies that printing guidelines do exist.

- **Write to agencies whose documents do not comply with the printing standards, seeking an explanation for the non-compliance and details of the costs of publications**

If an agency has not complied with the printing standards, even after a reminder, then it seems reasonable from CSIRO's perspective that the Committee seek an explanation for non-compliance and details of publication costs.