

20 October 2005

Mr Jason Sherd
Secretary
Joint Committee on Publications
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Sherd,

**Inquiry into the Distribution of Parliamentary Papers Series
Joint Committee on Publications**

The Council of Australian State Libraries (CASL), the peak body representing the National, State and Territory Libraries across Australia, would like to support the recommendations contained in the submission from the Australian Libraries and Information Association (ALIA) to this inquiry.

In particular, CASL would like to highlight the following points:

1. The Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS) is the most important record of Government and Parliament available to the Australian public. It is essential that the community have easy access to the PPS and that access be ensured for the long term. Access and preservation is undertaken by national, state, university and government libraries on behalf of the government. Distribution to these deposit libraries should be a free entitlement, regardless of the format.
2. Paper or hard copies of the PPS are the only format that can currently be reliably and securely preserved for the long term by most libraries and must remain the primary publishing format for the PPS. The PANDORA project, managed by the National Library of Australia, provides a permanent digital repository for selected government digital resources but it is dependent on government agencies improving information management practices and on continuing financial support from government so that it can collect, archive and provide ongoing access to the full range of important government publications.

3. Digital copies of current and selected past parliamentary papers and significant development of the website will provide alternative access opportunities for many in the community. This should be seen as a parallel service, under the same principles of free entitlement. Subscription charges would restrict access or limit the resources available for libraries. Cost recovery in most libraries for such essential information is not an option.
4. This inquiry presents an opportunity to widen the brief to consider broader issues of preservation and access to government information. In particular, issues surrounding digital information that is amended or lost from government websites without permanent record.

Yours sincerely,



Anne-Marie Schwirtlich
Chair
Council of Australian State Libraries

CASL Members:

- State Library of Victoria
- State Library of Tasmania
- National Library of Australia
- ACT Library and Information Service
- Northern Territory Library
- State Library of South Australia
- State Library of Western Australia
- State Library of New South Wales
- State Library of Queensland