



Parliament of Australia

National Library of Australia Submission to the Joint Committee on Publications

Inquiry into the Distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series

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 National Library of Australia has a mandate, under the *National Library of Australia Act 1960*, to collect, preserve and provide public access to Australia's documentary heritage in published form. The publishing record of the Parliament of Australia, and in particular the Parliamentary Papers Series, is an important information resource for all Australians. The Library strongly encourages the Joint Committee on Publications to take into account the principle of equity of access to information in any decisions it makes about the future publication and distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series and any other publications of the Parliament of Australia.

The Library offers the following comments on the terms of reference of this inquiry:

The Parliamentary Papers Series is a key source of public information about the activities of Government and access should not be restricted by the introduction of subscription or other charges. The Library urges the Committee to retain a *gratis*, wide distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series, and as a minimum to those bodies listed as *gratis* recipients at paragraph (a) in the *Guidelines on free entitlements to Parliamentary Papers Series*.

In considering the future publishing format of the Parliamentary Papers Series, the Library recommends that the Committee speak to the Library about the

standards and processes that need to be in place to ensure current and long term public access to publications in digital format. The Library, in collaboration with other national collecting institutions, archives, preserves and provides public access to a selection of Australian publications in digital format through *PANDORA: Australia's Web Archive*. The Library would wish to offer access to the public to any digital version of the Parliamentary Papers Series through *PANDORA*. The Committee should note that digital publications are not covered by the legal deposit section of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

The Library encourages the Committee to consider creating digital versions of existing Parliamentary Papers to enhance access by those Australians who are able to use information online. The Committee should also be aware, however, that many Australians have limited access to information in digital form due to a variety of factors including limited broadband access, lack of ICT skills and lack of access to suitable ICT infrastructure. For these reasons, the Committee would need to be confident that moving to a digital only publishing format would not inhibit public access to the Parliamentary Papers Series. The Library would be happy to discuss this further with the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jan Fullerton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jan Fullerton  
Director-General