Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Finance and Administration

Budget Estimates Hearings, 25-26 May 2005

Question: F55

Outcome: 4, Output: 4.1.1

Topic: Access to Australian Government Information

Hansard Page: F&PA 129

Senator Lundy asked:

What are the policies and protocols for the timely and accurate publication of and access to government documents?

Answer:

Australian Government departments and agencies produce and disseminate publications and documents in a variety of media and distribution arrangements. Individual departments and agencies make decisions on the method or methods of dissemination of each publication or document that will best meet the target audience needs.

There are various policy requirements and guidance that apply to the production and dissemination of Australian Government publications and documents. These are set out in the following website resources:

- *Publications Guidelines* (http://www.agimo.gov.au/information/guidelines) – the guidelines are designed to assist Australian Government agencies meet their obligations for government publications - to produce high quality electronic and printed publications that meet the needs of the intended audience, are discoverable by interested parties, and meet legislative and policy requirements. A wide range of policies, principles, guidelines, tools, better practice advice and other reference material relating to the online and print environments exist. This guide focuses primarily on mandated government requirements specific to publications. The front page of this website is at Attachment A.

- *Australian Government Web Guide* (http://www.agimo.gov.au/webguide) – the Web Guide brings together Australian Government resources for website management (including the Minimum Guide to Website Standards and Online Service Obligations) and provides a rich source of information and links to other resources. It covers topics such as online publications and newsletters and preserving online publications and documents. The front page of this website is at Attachment B.

- *The Online Information Service Obligations* (OISOs) (http://www.agimo.gov.au/information/oiso) - the OISOs ensure that information on Commonwealth agencies and agency services are available online. This is subject to considerations such as privacy, legal considerations, national security and the business interests of third parties. Compliance with OISOs guarantees the public access to a minimum level of information across all Commonwealth Government agencies. The OISOs are currently under review to ensure that they reflect current best practice. The front page and content from this website is at <u>Attachment C</u>.

There are also various legal requirements applying to the production and dissemination of Australian Government publications and document. Australian Government agencies must comply with relevant provisions of their enabling legislation and with relevant provisions of the various Acts relating to information management and dissemination. These include:

- *Archives Act 1983*

- *Audit Act 1901*

- *Copyright Act 1968*

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

- *Electronic Transactions Act 1999*

- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

- *Privacy Act 1988*

- *Public Service Act 1922* and Regulations

- *Parliamentary Papers Act 1908*

- *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 or Commonwealth Authorities and Companies 1997*

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Attachment A

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Attachment B

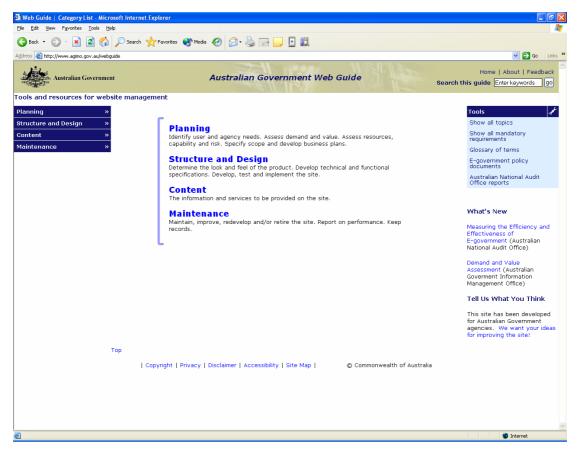# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

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Attachment C

AGIMO | Online Information Service Obligations - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File   Edit   View   Favorites   Tools   Help

Back | Search | Favorites | Media

Address http://www.agimo.gov.au/information/oiso

Home | About | Contact | My Account | Jobs | Search

Australian Government
Information Management Office

Better Government | Better Information | Better Services | Better Business | Better Infrastructure | Better Practice | Resource Centre

Finding Government Information
Online Information Service Obligations
Government Publishing Information
Publication Guidelines

Better Information > Online Information Service Obligations

Online Information Service Obligations (OISOs)

Project

Note: These are currently subject to review.

Introduction:

In April 2000 the Commonwealth Government released the Government Online Strategy. The Online Information Service Obligations, (OISOs), form a part of this strategy.

OISOs ensure that information on Commonwealth agencies and agency services are available online. This is subject to considerations such as privacy, legal considerations, national security and the business interests of third parties. Agencies should avoid posting information that is already available on the Internet and should link to existing information where available.

The Australian Government Information Management Office, has responsibility for OISOs and their ongoing development. As OISOs develop, this web page will continually be updated with useful examples of how agencies are complying with this component of the Government Online Strategy.

Compliance with OISOs guarantees the public access to a minimum level of information across all Commonwealth Government agencies. For instance:

- All agency information included in OISOs should have quality AGLS metadata attached and be included in a compliant Harvest Control List (HCL). Compliance with these standards will enhance the access and discoverability for users of government information.
- Agencies need to be aware of the existing frameworks, advice and guidelines when preparing these documents to go online. Examples of these include:
  - *The Protective Security Manual (PSM)* issued by the Attorney General's Department;
  - The Australian Communication-Electronic Security Instruction 33 (ACSI 33);
  - *Better Practice Guide Internet Delivery Decisions-A Government Program Manager's Guide* (ANAO) (HTML) or download as Adobe PDF;
  - *Guidelines for Commonwealth information published in electronic formats*; and
  - The Privacy Commissioner's *Privacy Principles*.
- Where Agencies have responsibility for multiple web sites it is not expected that all the web sites would provide access to the entire range of information falling under the OISOs. Agencies are to ensure OISO information is available at the most appropriate location after analysing their matrix_web' and stakeholders' information needs and the intent of the site, and are to provide links to subordinate or main sites as appropriate.

The OISOs are:

1 Directory information covering contact details and services;

2 Annual reports, agency strategic plans and other public accountability-type publications;

3 Reports submitted to Parliament;

Internet