

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
OFFICE OF THE PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

Question No. 161

Senator Stott-Despoja asked the following question at the hearing on 31 October 2005:

Where the Privacy Commissioner has given generic advice to an industry sector, or to a major individual business, about interpretation of Privacy Act requirements, what steps have been taken to ensure that consumers and their representative bodies are aware of the content of this advice?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The Office monitors its publicly available general guidance material, for example, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Information Sheets, on an ongoing basis. Part of this process involves reviewing general advice given to consumer, industry sectors, individual businesses, individual agencies, or any other stakeholders, with a view to incorporating, as appropriate, the generic aspects of the advice into the guidance material.

In addition, the Privacy Commissioner's recent report entitled "Getting in on the Act: The Review of the Private Sector Provisions of the Privacy Act 1988" recommended that the Australian Government consider funding the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to undertake a systemic and comprehensive education program to raise community awareness of privacy rights and obligations (Recommendation 26). This would assist in making sure that as many people and organisations as possible were aware of the information contained in our general guidance materials.