

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 On 16 March 2005, the Senate referred the provisions of the National Security Information Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 (the Bill) to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 11 May 2005.

Overview of the Bill

1.2 The Bill seeks to amend the *National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) Act 2004*. That Act aims to prevent the disclosure of information in federal criminal proceedings where the disclosure is likely to prejudice national security. The Bill will extend the operation of the Act to include certain civil proceedings.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.3 As mentioned above, the Bill was referred to the Committee on 16 March 2005. Details of the inquiry, the Bill and associated documents were immediately placed on the Committee's website. The Committee immediately wrote to over 90 organisations and individuals to invite submissions by 1 April 2005. The Committee also advertised the inquiry in *The Australian* newspaper on 23 March 2005.

1.4 The Committee received 16 submissions, and these are listed at Appendix 1. Submissions were placed on the Committee's website for ease of access by the public.

1.5 The Committee held a public hearing in Canberra on 13 April 2005. A list of witnesses who appeared at the hearing is at Appendix 2 and copies of the Hansard transcript are available through the Internet at <http://aph.gov.au/hansard>.

Acknowledgement

1.6 The Committee thanks those organisations and individuals who made submissions and gave evidence at the public hearing.

Note on references

1.7 References in this report are to individual submissions as received by the Committee, not to a bound volume. References to the Committee Hansard are to the proof Hansard: page numbers may vary between the proof and the official Hansard transcript.

