

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

1.1 On 16 March 2005, the Senate referred the provisions of the Criminal Code Amendment (Suicide Related Material Offences) Bill 2005 to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 10 May 2005.

1.2 The Criminal Code Amendment (Suicide Related Material Offences) Bill 2005 contains offences which were originally introduced in the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Telecommunications Offences and Other Measures) Bill 2004. After its introduction into the Senate, the Federal Government decided to split the original bill in two, and then reintroduced the two separate bills into the House of Representatives as the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Telecommunications Offences and Other Measures) (No. 2) 2004 and the Criminal Code Amendment (Suicide Related Material Offences) Bill 2004.

1.3 The latter bill (the 2004 Bill) was briefly debated in the House of Representatives on 11 August 2004 but did not reach the Senate before the prorogation of the 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament. However, the provisions of the 2004 Bill had been referred to the committee before the prorogation of Parliament, with the committee calling for and receiving submissions before it had to discontinue the inquiry at that time.

1.4 The 2005 Bill replicates the 2004 Bill, but contains additional provisions which will insert new subsections 474.29A(3) and (4) into the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (the Criminal Code).

### Conduct of the inquiry

1.5 The committee advertised the inquiry in *The Australian* newspaper on 23 March 2005, and invited submissions by 1 April 2005. Details of the inquiry, the Bill and associated documents were placed on the committee's website. The committee also wrote to over 60 organisations and individuals.

1.6 The committee received 31 submissions, including several supplementary submissions. 21 of these submissions had been received in relation to the 2004 Bill but, at the request of their authors, were treated as submissions to the current inquiry. Submissions were placed on the committee's website for ease of access by the public. The submissions are also listed at Appendix 1.

1.7 The committee held a public hearing in Canberra on 14 April 2005. A list of witnesses who appeared at the hearing is at Appendix 2. Copies of the relevant Hansard transcript are available through the Internet at <http://aph.gov.au/hansard>.

## **Acknowledgement**

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

## **Note on references**

1.9 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.