

1998–99- 2000

**PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

COMMITTEE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Report on the operations of the Committee for 1999

Committee of Members' Interests

Membership

39th Parliament

Hon A Somlyay MP (Chair)
Hon J A Crosio MP (Deputy Chair)
Mr K J Andrews MP
Mr H A Jenkins MP
Mr P Neville MP
Mr P Nugent MP
Mr N O'Keefe MP

Clerk to the Committee:

Mr B C Wright

Introduction

1. Under the provisions of standing order 28A by which the Committee is established, the Committee is required, as soon as practicable after each 31 December, to prepare and table in the House a report on its operations during that year.
2. This is the report of the Committee for the calendar year 1999.

Responsibilities of the Committee

3. Standing order 28A sets out the following terms of reference for the Committee:
 - (i) to inquire into and report upon the arrangements made for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of a Register of Members' Interests;
 - (ii) to consider any proposals made by Members and others as to the form and content of the register;
 - (iii) to consider any specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests;
 - (iv) to consider what changes to any code of conduct adopted by the House are necessary or desirable;
 - (v) to consider what classes of persons (if any) other than Members ought to be required to register and declare their interests; and

- (vi) to make recommendations upon these and any other matters which are relevant.

A report in accordance with these terms of reference follows.

Arrangements made for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of the register

4. No change was made to the arrangements by which the register is maintained. Since 1986 arrangements approved by the Committee provided that the register could be inspected, by appointment, between 10 am and 12 noon and 2 pm and 4 pm on working days in the office of the Registrar. In addition the Registrar may grant permission for the register to be inspected outside of those hours if the Registrar is satisfied that the circumstances surrounding the request warrant the exercise of such a discretion.
5. In total the register was inspected on forty-four occasions during the year. Sixteen of these inspections were made outside of the standard hours. These inspections take no account of the use of copies of statements of interests and notifications of alterations of interests tabled by the Chair and made available through the Table Office.
6. Notification of alterations of interests and a Statement of Registrable Interests received during the period 7 December 1998 to 31 March 1999 were tabled on 31 March 1999. Alterations received from 1 April 1999 to 29 June 1999 were tabled on 30 June 1999 and alterations received during period 30 June to 9 December 1999 were tabled on 9 December 1999.

Proposals made by Members and others as to the form and content of the Register

7. No proposals were received for the alteration of the form or content of the register.

Specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests

8. No formal complaint in relation to the registration of interests was received during the year. The House of Representatives itself had deleted the requirement for the oral declaration of interests in 1989 and this part of the requirements set out in standing order 28A is no longer applicable.

Changes to any code of conduct

9. The House has not adopted any code of conduct for Members, notwithstanding the tabling of such a draft code by the Speaker, on behalf of a working group, on 21 June 1995. The Committee was, therefore, not required to consider this matter.

Registration of interests by other classes of person

10. The Committee did not consider this matter during 1999.

Other matters

11. The Committee had prepared a version of the registration form which could be received by Members in electronic form, completed, printed out and signed. The proposed form was circulated to all Members and comments were received on it. Such an option would give Members an alternative means of recording the relevant details, although the Committee would require a printout to be signed by each Member. The Committee will consider giving Members this option from the commencement of the next Parliament.

(HON. A SOMLYAY)
Chair

16 March 2000