54th Report

Introduction

In November 2011, the Presiding Officers agreed to undertake a review of the management and delivery of information and communication technology (ICT) related services and equipment to the Parliament. The Report on the review (the Roche Report) was delivered to the Presiding Officers in August 2012.

A governance structure for the provision of ICT to the Parliament

A central recommendation in the Roche Report was that a Parliamentary ICT Advisory Board be established to, among other things, oversee the development of a Strategic Plan for Parliamentary ICT by the Chief Information Officer, provide guidance to the Chief Information Officer on overall strategic objectives and required outcomes, and approve IT security policy and oversight network security.

It is the intention of the Presiding Officers that the Senate Appropriations and Staffing Committee and the House Appropriations and Administration Committee will jointly play a high-level role in the future architecture of governance in relation to the provision of ICT to the Parliament – and particularly in relation to the funding and administration of those services. To enable this role to be undertaken, it is important that the committees are able to meet jointly.

Senate Standing Order 40(1) provides that Senate committees may meet with committees of the House of Representatives only by order of the Senate. It is expected that such orders will be sought on a case-by-case basis.

However, some committees which generally conduct their business as joint committees are specifically empowered to "confer and sit as a joint committee with" their House of Representatives counterpart. For example, the House Committee is so authorised under Standing Order 21(1); the Senators' Interests Committee is so authorised under Standing Order 22A(8) and the Publications Committee is so authorised under Standing Order 22(1). Standing Order 22(3) further provides that the Publications Committee has certain powers when sitting with its House of Representatives counterpart.

Given the ongoing nature of the proposed governance role to be undertaken by the two committees, it is proposed that Standing Order 19, which establishes the Appropriations and Staffing Committee, be amended to authorise the Committee to confer and sit as a joint committee with the its House of Representatives counterpart.

The terms of the proposed amendments are appended to this report as Attachment A.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the Senate adopt the amendments to Standing Order 19 proposed in this report.

Senator the Hon John Hogg
Chairman

November 2012