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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

Reference: Printing standards for documents presented to parliament

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**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PUBLICATIONS**

Monday, 18 June 2007

Members: Mrs Draper (*Chair*), Senator Barnett (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Marshall, Nash, Hurley, Sterle and Wortley and Mr Adams, Mr Baker, Ms Corcoran, Mr Hayes, Mrs Hull and Mr Johnson

Members in attendance: Senators Barnett and Sterle and Mr Adams and Mrs Hull

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

The printing standards for documents presented to Parliament, with particular reference to:

- the necessity of the use of colour and illustrations within documents;
- the cost of producing documents and whether value for money is being obtained; and
- investigating the feasibility of sanctions against organisations that do not follow the printing standards.

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Committee met at 10.33 am

ANTMANN, Mr Jansson, Manager, Marketing and Communications, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources

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ACTING CHAIR (Senator Barnett)—Good morning. Today's public hearing is being broadcast by the House monitoring system, so I call for a motion that the proceedings be broadcast in accordance with the resolution of the Senate of 13 February 1997. There being no objection, that is carried. Four submissions as per the list circulated have been received. I call for a motion that submission Nos 6 to 9 be accepted as evidence and be authorised for publication. There being no objection, it is so ordered.

I thank all those around the table for being here this morning for this roundtable discussion with the Joint Committee on Publications into *Printing standards for documents presented to parliament*. We are very interested in hearing your views and ideas on printing standards and we hope that the format we have structured will enable discussions around and across the table.

The roundtable is a formal proceeding of the parliament and warrants the same respect as proceedings of the House and the Senate. Although the committee does not require evidence to be given under oath, the giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. However, this should not prevent witnesses from putting forward opinions or ideas. The roundtable will centre on the issues outlined in the committee's discussion paper which, I understand, you have seen and read. Other issues may arise during the day and we are happy to take them on board.

Mr ADAMS—As the Acting Chair was not involved with our last report, I will point out a couple of things that have come forward to this roundtable. When we did our recent report, the issue of the slowness of reports coming in for finalisation and to get tidied up was a continuing problem. It was out to three or four years in the extreme cases. There are reasons why departments are late, but we thought that it was getting beyond a reasonable thing.

One of the reasons we did that report was the move over to electronic versions and the more digital world, but problems arise with departments having a report on the website for a year and, when the new report comes out, the other disappears and the small group of people that want it cannot find it. There were occasions when one or two areas of a report disappeared totally and could not be found. Those issues must be dealt with but we are not quite up to that. Quite a lot is still going on in libraries and historical recording outside the archives. There is also the issue of CDs, which sometimes last for a long time and sometimes do not, so the recording of digital matter by librarians and archivists is also in public debate at the moment. There are real issues with moving over to a total electronic base and we are not quite there yet.

We are continuing to look at whether or not our guidelines are too tough. The committee felt the need to have a roundtable with the departments. It is great to have a graphic person here using graphs, colours and whatever. The committee wants to hear what you think about the use of graphics. Will it waste money? We realise that a report from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet might be a bit different from an annual report from the CSIRO or somewhere, where more graphics are used.

I will open up the roundtable so that people can give us some feedback. We will start with the activities of reporting, the main purpose of which is to report to parliament. But I understand that some departments are now broadening the issue by sending reports to the media and other players. Therefore, they argue that the report might need to be a bit bolder than it would be if it were just to be a report to the parliament under the statutory requirements for that.

ACTING CHAIR—If it makes it easier, the terms of reference are in three parts:

- the necessity of the use of colour and illustrations within documents;
- the cost of producing documents and whether value for money is being obtained; and
- investigating the feasibility of sanctions against organisations that do not follow the printing standards.

We can kick off with the necessity of the use of colour and illustrations within documents, but you can talk more generally about some of the issues that Dick Adams has raised as well.

Mr Neame—Would it be appropriate from an industry perspective for us to open the batting, so to speak. In our submission to the inquiry we addressed the issue of the necessity of the use of colour and illustrations within documents and put the proposition forward that in the last three to five years there had been significant advances in technology used in printing that has narrowed the cost between producing only two-colour and producing four-colour. Now we have the technology of direct-to-print, rather than making plates, and a whole range of other technical issues. Our submission supports the proposition that colour is now nearly as cost-effective as black and white or two-colour.

ACTING CHAIR—Your submission talks about 10 to 15 per cent difference. Is that right?

Mr Neame—Correct, yes.

Mr ADAMS—The use of recycled paper is also an issue that has been discussed. The archives are not happy to use recycled paper. Would it have a use in the printing process?

Mr May—There are a couple of aspects to the issue of recycled paper. One is that the source of the raw material for recycled paper is of dubious origin and quality, and probably very little of it is of archival quality. Given that it is of doubtful origin, it could be any sort of dirty raw material that comes from non-sustainable sources or is poorly constructed. From an environmental perspective it is not particularly attractive either. We tend to find that the archival quality papers these days are manufactured with probably the best environmental standards available in Europe, Australia and other countries, and probably at a lower cost. Most archival papers are able to be recycled themselves and, therefore, meet the environmental credential in that regard.

Mr ADAMS—Most departments take that on board when they are getting stuff printed. With respect to the cost, are you saying that you can now do a four-print run digitally bringing it down to about the same cost?

Mr Daniel—I would have to say that it is not necessarily due to the digital application. When we do most of these publications they are printed offset. Where the pricing has changed and become more cost-effective is that 10 years ago we were all using film. We had to make dyeline proofs from which we made plates. If there was a correction, it had to be restripped into the film;

it was very labour intensive. Today we use direct-to-plate systems, so it is all proofed. Whilst we do create proofs, it is a lot easier to do alterations and reproof them, but the manual side of it has gone. The late model presses that most of us are buying today have autoplate—you load the plate into the front of the press and push a button; they are all on and in exactly the same position. The make-ready time has come down from hours to minutes and, consequently, that gives a huge cost saving. The other side is that we are all buying multicoloured presses today, so instead of doing four and five passes to get these things done, we are doing it in one pass. The latest model presses are what we call long perfectors, so they are printing four-colour process and varnish on two sides in one pass. The sheet comes out completed, having passed through the press only once, whereas 10 years ago it was probably going through the press three times. All those things bring the cost down.

Mr ADAMS—That is cost-efficiency, but can we switch back to what is needed in a report. We have heard arguments about changes and that we need to put more in our report to parliament now because it goes out to a bigger audience; it goes to the press, and we want to build our image as a department, or whatever.

Mr Logan—From the outset we would recognise that reports, particularly annual reports, are being produced for the parliament and, therefore, value for money is probably one of the guiding principles. But just as we recognise that a document like the PBS is quite readable and understandable in black and white—that is, in two-colour, black on white—there is a widely held recognition among agencies now, particularly in an online environment, that when we are working originally in colour in designing and in concept testing a document or a campaign, it makes just as much sense and the cost-effectiveness follows, to then publish or reproduce in colour. Our experience is that on a large run, the difference in cost between two-colour—black on white, red on white or green on white, whatever colour you choose—and four-colour is between 10 and 20 per cent. From our perspective, and certainly in promoting the diversity of the nation and its many cultures, it makes a lot more sense to have a full colour publication than it does to have a black and white publication. You lose so much of the depth and the intent of the message.

Finally, in an online environment, we do not believe that the published word in hard copy is on the way out—in fact, quite the converse. But we do recognise that the online environment adds much more to the printed word. An annual report for the parliament has, not only a market in the gallery and with stakeholders but, online, tens of thousands of interested browsers and surfers who would be much more attracted to it in colour than they would be if it were in black and white or in a single colour.

ACTING CHAIR—On that point, are any of the departments or agencies in the habit of producing two reports—one full colour and one black and white? Or do you accept the fact that you produce the one report that goes to parliament and is available to others?

Mr Logan—It would not be economical to do two prints.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you.

Ms Fisher—We are required by our legislation to produce two reports, but not for the purpose of one in black and white and one in colour. As well as an annual report on the activities of the

commission during the year, we also produce an annual *State of the service report* which is also subject to the tabling requirements. We found that the *State of the service report*, while it is primarily an accountability tool, does have a wider audience and it is used widely across the service to foster continuous improvement. We are finding increasingly that it has a wide international audience. This report, in particular, where there is a lot of data, tables, graphs et cetera would benefit from being able to make far greater use of colour. I think we are unique in that respect.

Ms Barbour—I agree with what Ms Fisher said about graphs and tables. We need to use different colours to show the different aspects of the graphs and tables in our annual report. This year, we are doing a two-colour print run with graphs. When it comes to explaining the financial statements, we find it better using more than one colour when we do the graphs around that. We also find that it helps with the branding of the organisation to have a bit more life in it. You will notice hits on websites for annual reports have a lot to do with job seekers. That is an important aspect of an annual report for us as well.

Mr Antmann—We produce four annual reports every year. We produce the annual report for the department that we generally restrict to a two-colour process internally with a two-colour cover. We also have the Pooled Development Fund, the Industry Research and Development Fund and the Innovation Investment Fund annual reports which are all tabled. They are provided to our industry stakeholders more broadly, so there is an external market for them and we take into consideration the look and feel of them more than we would with, say, the department's annual report. Additionally, we have a special online edition of the annual report which is a full HTML version, so we do not simply put a PDF version of the annual report up as tabled up, we create a full HTML version.

ACTING CHAIR—Is that much different to the other annual reports?

Mr Antmann—The content is exactly the same. It is simply a different medium, so it is more searchable and accessible.

ACTING CHAIR—Do others do the same? Are your reports online? Yes, there are nods all around.

Mr Logan—We also have a video introduction with our annual report this year for the online version. We included a CD-ROM with it which was an introduction by the secretary. We had some particularly important news or announcements to make in the report that we wanted to highlight for those who wanted a quick look at it. In fact that report won the online award from the institute this year for best annual report.

ACTING CHAIR—It was well-noted at Senate budget estimates that you won that particular award and I will congratulate you again on your success with the winning of that award for your report.

Mr ADAMS—Whether the archivists will be able to keep it for longevity becomes another debate for the Publications Committee, but I am sure the hard copy will keep for history.

ACTING CHAIR—Are your publications primarily for parliament, are they primarily for your other key stakeholders or do they have a dual purpose and you prepare them as such?

Ms Barbour—We do them primarily for parliament, but they have a dual service for our stakeholders. We keep that in the back of our minds when preparing them.

Mr ADAMS—I understand the four reports are going out to your stakeholders, to industry and overseas. How much do you put into the graphics?

Mr Wilson—We put a lot into it. It is one of those things where we used to follow the guidelines of three processes on the cover so that there would only be two colours and a matt sideways, which is essentially what we do with most of our reports. The primary target is always parliament with an adjunct to the stakeholder sectors. Those going to various stakeholders would be the IR&D annual report, the PDF annual report or the Innovation Investment Fund's annual report. They are prepared in such a way that they will have a certain look and feel targeted towards those particular sectors, but they are still always kept within two-colour internal and a three-process cover.

We do what we can using those processes which, from a design point of view, is quite good fun because it is quite a challenge. You can still make them look really good using those processes—you do not have to go to four-colour. I can understand that some of the different organisations have very complex information that they need to pass over.

Mr ADAMS—Graphics and—

Mr Wilson—Yes and, consequently, more colours and lots of graphs and detail—the more colours you use in that will simplify that process. We do not necessarily have that complication, so we can get away a little bit more with producing work in two-colour internally and still conveying the information that we need to.

ACTING CHAIR—Do you use photographs very much?

Mr Wilson—Very rarely. The only photograph that we use in the departmental annual report is a small picture of the secretary in half-tone.

Mr ADAMS—Do you use full colour for the secretary?

Mr Wilson—No, it is just in one colour. In the IR&D annual report there are case studies of various industry associations that have been given grants for various things—either tax concessions or start-up grants or things like that. If their case study appears, they supply a photograph associated with the case study but, again, they are only in one colour.

Mr ADAMS—From their submission, the industry has some of the best technology in Australia—top of the world stuff or close to it. Using that new technology for your cover, which may take you to four-colour instead of three-colour, in cost efficiency terms would that be within 10 to 20 per cent?

Mr Wilson—The cost difference itself is not high. We try to strictly adhere to the guidelines because that is what they are there for.

ACTING CHAIR—Is it easier and cheaper to design in four-colour or is there not much difference?

Mr Wilson—To me it is no difference at all. It does not matter whether you are designing a one-colour or a four-colour as you know where you are starting from. If you know the job is a two-colour job, then you design in two-colour. If you know the job is a four-colour job then you would design in four-colour.

ACTING CHAIR—And the cost differential is not as much as has been indicated?

Mr Wilson—It is not a huge cost differential. But by the same token, our annual report is a fairly hefty tome and the difference would be quite a bit to do the whole thing in four-colour. It would be 15 to 20 per cent of our print bill which would be substantial enough.

Mr Antmann—The requirement to restrict design to two colours is not restrictive from the creative perspective. One of the areas where there might be some cost efficiencies would be in the ASL costs associated with laying out the annual report. We absorb all our costs. We do not farm the project out. We have an internal graphic design area. Depending on the way graphs and charts are submitted to us for inclusion, often that requires replication of that into a two-colour format if they have been submitted in four-colour. It is obviously quicker and easier if we can simply transpose the four-colour graph or chart, as submitted, into that report. From that perspective, there would probably be a cost saving as far as ASL is concerned.

Mrs Boulter—In talking about the complexity of information, your graphs may not be very complicated, but we deal with planning documents and maps with lots of different keys where the use of colour is very useful. It makes it a lot easier to understand if you colour code different areas and items on maps.

Mr Postai—In adding to the cost debate, we are in favour of full colour without a doubt, as Sandi explained. The importance of our annual report to a degree is the diversity of photographs that we use and the cultures portrayed in those photographs and the underpinning scenes that come through. The other consideration from a cost point of view is the difference between using full bleed on a document—that is, having the colour bleed to the edges, hence having to work to a larger paper format—versus using no bleed, hence working toward a standard paper size. There is a cost difference associated with that, possibly 10 to 15 per cent over the course of the project.

Mr Daniel—It is probably more than that because you cannot print if they bleed. As 32-page sections, you have to print them at 16s on a bigger sheet and that then doubles the amount of plates and the run time and the whole thing is double. Once you go to jobs that bleed as opposed to jobs that do not bleed, you are almost doubling, probably 60 per cent of the cost in printing. Everything goes up—printing, folding—

Mr ADAMS—Would you define bleed for us?

Mr Daniel—If you pick up a book and it has colour going to the edge of the sheet, it bleeds off the end of the sheet so there is no white paper. What happens with publications is that the sheet sizes come in international standard size and they are designed to fit a certain number of pages up on a sheet. If it bleeds, you do not have enough room to grip the sheet within the press boundaries to print it. Consequently, you have to buy a bigger sheet or, if the sheet is too big for the press, you have to then go to a smaller sheet and run fewer pages up.

Mr May—There is one additional point that I would like to make on that. Different printing companies have different types of printing presses and, therefore, the economics of bleeds versus no bleeds, sizing, two-colour versus four-colour et cetera will vary a little bit. The major area where it will impact is the actual size of the print run. For example, my company can print with bleeds at a cost of probably 10 per cent more than without bleeds, but only on the shorter end of the market. David's company, which handles the longer end and bigger print runs, can get more economical service from a document that does not bleed as opposed to one that does bleed. The answer is that there is no cut and dried answer. Without bleeds will fit any press, but with bleeds, depending on the size of your print run, may or may not be more economical. I guess that comes back to the education of the print buyers or those who commission the job in the first place to say, 'Let's have a look at what we are doing first. Let's talk to the possible end producer of the job and let's see where that takes us.'

Mrs HULL—Do you speak with the client about the cost of a report that has bleed in it against the cost of a report with a white border, which would be a far reduced cost?

Mr May—Unfortunately in probably 99 per cent of cases we do not get to talk to the designers, departments or print buyers until the job has been designed, and then we are left to pick up the pieces regardless of the print elements. David may have a different experience but certainly in my experience we are usually presented with a fait accompli.

ACTING CHAIR—So it is designed somewhere else and then you get the design.

Mr May—Yes. The design and print management is all handled by non-printers. Necessarily the design is handled by designers, but very often there is little communication at the design and commissioning stage with those who will produce the document at the end. Sometimes a very minor design style may add significantly to the cost rather than had the design style been a little different.

Mrs HULL—One of the critical issues that we need to look at is: how rigorous is the interaction with the printer who will know the final cost of the printing? The departments and others are not liaising very closely and are just accepting what the designer does, and it is without recognition of the fact that you could get almost the same outcome—except you might have a white border—for a far reduced price and with far better value for the taxpayer. That seems to be an area that is lacking.

Mr Daniel—There is often touted around the industry a Canberra B5 size, which is actually undersize B5. If you put an actual B5 document up against an undersized B5 document, they are smaller by about 3 to 5 millimetres. They do that to make it cheaper. The other point to bear in mind is that most of the people who are doing the design work have never worked in printing companies. They are graphic designers and, while they are artists, they do not necessarily

understand exactly what goes on when you are putting ink on paper, as we do. Because they do not understand what size the sheets come in they might select a stock that comes in a peculiar size or is not available in B5 so it does not suit. They might pick an imported grade that you can only buy from a certain merchant. That means you pay a special price for it because they are the only people who carry it.

Also, very little recycled stock is made in Australia. We only make offsets—grades that do not have a coating on them—and consequently those coated grades, which are specified all the time, mean that we are bringing someone else's rubbish into the country, printing on it and then most of those products end up in landfill because they are not suitable for recycling to make office paper. The real alternative is to use sustainable forests, virgin pulp and better grades of paper.

Mrs HULL—For me, the fog is lifting. I could not work out why the inquiry in 2006 seemed to say that printing costs for four colours was 70 per cent higher than for two colours. It is not really the issue of the printing costs of four colours; it is actually the design and layout that might mean a difference of 70 per cent. That 70 per cent figure has basically been refuted in all of the submissions and from all of the departments. It appears to me now that the questions that we asked were not the correct questions. If you ask the right questions you will get the right answer. It is now starting to become clear to me. It is not just a matter of printing four colours, but the design and layout of those four colours that can substantially increase cost.

Mr Daniel—That is pretty accurate, but the other thing that can also change that is dependent upon where they get quotes. Somebody may have a certain size press and cannot produce the document on a certain format, so they buy a different sheet size to do that. That can cause some of the price issues. As Kieran said, it depends on run lengths. If there are only 300 or 500 copies, you would produce them in a different way to printing 5,000, 10,000 or 15,000. For a longer print run you have to look at getting it through the press quicker and, ideally, using less paper. The things that cause most of the cost are press time and paper. For most jobs, the ball park figure for paper is about 30 per cent of the cost. Depending on the type of stock used, it could be 50 per cent, but the rule of thumb is that it is about one-third of a job.

Mrs HULL—We are thinking about how we would change, or whether we should change, the relevant guidelines for printing. We need to bear in mind that it is sometimes more valuable to have colours. I know when I have chaired reports I have stayed with the two-colour with maybe a full-colour front cover, if something needs to be demonstrated. Sometimes, it is very difficult to work within just two colours to get the point across—I do understand that. If you were redesigning the criteria and the guidelines, then would you look at considering the paper and the guidelines surrounding full print, being that it should not bleed because that would be an additional cost?

Mr Daniel—That is right, yes.

Mrs HULL—Is there anything else that you should consider?

Mr Daniel—Most black and white jobs do not bleed, so if you are printing a job in black and white and they have margins, they do not bleed. That is why black and white is probably the most cost-effective way to print. A lot of people that print two-colour jobs and put a border on them usually have the border running off the edge of the page—it happens all the time. Or they

print a little box in the bottom corner with a folio in it and that bleeds. They are the things that add to the costs. If you took folios out that did not have borders on them and did not put in headers that ran to the edge of the sheet it would be better as those things create problems. They are the main issues.

Ms McClelland—There is a very wide range of documents presented to the parliament. When you take into account those documents that we call deemed to be presented, which are not the ones presented after question time but are included in the *Votes And Proceedings* as presented to the parliament—a similar category in the Senate is clerk's documents—I think it would be fair to say that the vast majority of documents presented to parliament are black and white. We are heading towards 7,000 deemed documents this year and the majority of those are A4 black and white. The minority of documents are, in the main, in the annual report category. That is where colour is used. To an extent, they are a slightly different category of document to many of the other documents presented to the parliament. The Department of the House of Representatives documents are basically black and white with the exception of the annual report which has two colours and a full-colour cover. We accord with the amendment to the guidelines allowing for full-colour covers and two colours.

Mr Pye—I generally concur with what Robyn has said. The issue with clerk's documents or deemed papers is not so much at the forefront because, unlike the annual reports and those sorts of documents, we only receive one copy of those documents; we do not do a mass presentation or distribution of those documents. It does put them into a different category. The documents that we produce in the Department of the Senate follow the committee's guidelines fairly rigorously. Committee reports, which are the documents we produce the most of, are generally black text on white paper with perhaps a bit of colour on the cover. We standardised the covers in the Department of the Senate a few years ago to achieve some cost savings. I would suggest that it would be useful to have some more flexibility in the guidelines as far as the presentation of committee reports is concerned. I am sure all of you have been on parliamentary committees where you would have seen usefulness in adding photographs where there had been a site visit, or adding maps for things like rainfall distribution, which could usefully be done with illustrations and with modest use of colour. Where it can be shown that the cost increases are only marginal, I think that it is a worthwhile change to the standards.

Mr ADAMS—Robyn said that about 7,000 documents have come into the House of Representatives up to this point in time. What number would there be in the Senate?

Mr Pye—The same set of documents are received on either side as far as the deemed papers, clerk's documents et cetera, are concerned.

Mr May—Referring to an earlier point, one of the issues that can add significantly to the cost of printing is the inexperience of the print buyer in departments, being unfamiliar with either design or printing processes or, in some cases, both. We often see a situation where a person who has only recently been put into that position will approach a series of printers for the standard three quotes and pick a printer or three printers who are not the best equipped to do that type of job. We do not have the pool of experienced print managers we had 10 or 15 years ago. John Lockwood from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources is an experienced print buyer who was familiar with the ins and outs of the game. The training of these people in the departments and agencies probably ranges from non-existent to lacking. In addition, we get to

the point, which is familiar to us all, where we get somebody trained and then they are so good at their job that they get a promotion and go elsewhere. The contacts that that person has built up as well as the experience and knowledge base goes when they depart and the new person comes into the job and has to start from scratch. From an industry perspective we would be keen to see the training of print buyers upgraded in some way, whether the industry is involved or not.

The other aspect that significantly adds to the cost of some jobs is the inability of designers in the departments and agencies to have final content signed off in sufficient time for the printers to do their job. Anecdotal evidence is that a designer will present artwork to a printer and the printer will produce the printers proof, which is intended purely and simply for the designer to check that the layout and the content have translated correctly from his or her artwork to the printing process. At that stage those proofs then go for the first or second time to the person who is responsible for signing off and approving the final job and, at that point, it is decided they do not like the content and changes ensue. While it is true that the cost of making those changes post-proofing has come down with the elimination of the film step in the process, it does significantly add to the cost through additional artwork charges. Also, the lateness of the copy arriving at the printer reduces the printing time which means that the printers cannot schedule their printing presses in an orderly manner. It often means that they need to call in staff on overtime or need to postpone a job to fit another job in that has a deadline of two or three days. When we need to do that there is a cost involved. They are peripheral costs to the initial quote but can significantly impact on the bottom line of that print job.

ACTING CHAIR—I want to move on a little bit and ask about the size. B5 is the guideline, but are there advantages or disadvantages of A4 or another size? I would like some feedback on that issue.

Mr May—Yes, there is an impact. David alluded earlier to the fact that there is a tendency in Canberra to produce some documents in what they call Canberra B5, which is undersize and does not meet standards, because of the requirement for the document to bleed. The B5 document with no bleed can be printed in 32-page sections as opposed to 16 with bleed, halving the number of print runs. Similarly, with A4 being a bigger document, a smaller number of pages can be printed on each pass and, therefore, if the document is an A4 32-page then that is probably four passes on the press, whereas a 32-page B5 with no bleeds is two passes on the press, or, in the case of the long perfecter, it is only one pass. There are some significant cost impacts. In addition, for A4, more paper is used, and often with an A4 document there is less information put on each page. There is the same information on an A4 page as on a B5 page but it is spread out. This is not always the case, but sometimes it is printed in a bigger typeface because it is an A4 document. So there are some impacts. I am sure David would have a little bit more to add to that from his perspective, and no doubt the designers will have some input to that from their perspective.

Mr Daniel—I concur with what Kieran said. A lot more paper is used doing those documents that are currently printed in B5. If you do a quote for a B5 publication as opposed to an A4 publication, the price is usually somewhere between 30 and 50 per cent dearer.

Mrs HULL—For B5?

Mr Daniel—For A4, as opposed to B5.

ACTING CHAIR—That is a very high percentage. Is there any feedback on that from around the table or from departmental representatives?

Mr Daniel—B5 is 250 by 176.

ACTING CHAIR—Is there any other feedback on that? Do people concur with that comment on the cost differential and the disadvantages of A4?

Ms McClelland—An aspect of A4 is that you can fit more words on the page. It does not invariably follow because sometimes you have a space after a line for alignment. An A4 page is bigger, so you can put more words on it and the length of the document is reduced. We changed our preparation of the *Votes and Proceedings* from a B5 to an A4 presentation from the last parliament and the length of the document has come down. That is a factor to think about. The bulk of the other documents that are presented to the parliament to which the guidelines apply are in A4 size. As Richard said, for the parliament stock, only a small number of those documents are required.

ACTING CHAIR—I notice that your submission does advocate moving to A4, as opposed to the printing industry and I think it is the Public Service Commission that suggest retaining it at B5. I would like to explore this issue with others around the table.

Ms McClelland—Our submission talks about cost versus readability considerations on the A4-B5 issue. Readability for line length and ability to scan a line is an issue with A4 documents. The other aspect of B5 documents is the actual size of the document to flip through—it is quite readable as well.

Mr May—I need to clarify the comment on the content of B5 versus A5. It is not always the case, but there is a tendency on occasion for the B5 content to be transferred to an A4 page and made larger. Obviously Ms McClelland's comment that you can fit more text to an A4 page is correct, and from a printing perspective we do not have an opinion one way or the other. Both of those documents will fit the presses effectively, and it is then a case of how many pages can be satisfactorily used for each individual publication.

Mr ADAMS—And using bigger print, because we are all getting older!

ACTING CHAIR—Just you, Dick Adams! We have been advised that the parliamentary paper series—which is half of all government documents—that are printed on A4 paper are then required to be reprinted on B5 paper to allow for binding and storage. Is that one of the reasons why you are suggesting a move to A4? That would seem to be creating a bit of work for you.

Ms McClelland—I do not think that that was the primary consideration. It was a consideration of cost versus readability. Probably the minority of documents—indeed, only a very small minority—would require reprinting.

ACTING CHAIR—That is the advice that I got: about half of all government documents that are printed on A4 are required to be reprinted on B5, but that is not the case as far as you are concerned.

Ms McClelland—I would obviously have to make absolutely certain that that was correct.

Mr Pye—I do not think that figure is right. I am sure that we could look into it, but I think only a small number of documents that are destined for the parliamentary papers series are printed on A4. It would be one of those limiting factors where a department fails to meet that size requirement. That would be one of the reasons that we would go back to a department and require them to reprint it. But it would be one of the very few times when the parliament would request that a department reprints.

Mr ADAMS—The A4 is what we normally print off electronically, so it fits into that broader scale of where we are going with paper usage.

Mrs HULL—My understanding is that it is not half of all documents. Half of all of the documents that are printed on A4 require reprinting to B5, but that is not half of all the documents printed.

ACTING CHAIR—I think the advice we have is that the parliamentary papers series—about half of all government documents—are printed on A4, but that is not correct.

Mrs HULL—I think that you are reading it incorrectly. It is saying that about half of all the government documents that are printed on A4 paper are required to be reprinted. So it is half of all of those that are printed on A4. That does not equate to half of all the parliamentary papers, from my understanding.

The Secretary—The parliamentary paper series is about half of all of the government documents that parliament receives, and any that are printed on A4 are then printed on B5.

ACTING CHAIR—Does that sound right?

Mr Pye—That does sound right to me.

Ms McClelland—That sounds absolutely right.

ACTING CHAIR—Are there any other issues on that matter?

Mr Postai—With the paper size of annual reports—that is, B5—there is physically only 24 millimetres difference in the width of the page that we are talking about. Designers will always look at their margins—left and right. So we are looking at 12 millimetres either side, which is neither here nor there. From a height point of view we are looking at 47 millimetres, and again that is a breakdown of 20-odd millimetres top and bottom. From a physical information point of view of putting the information from a B5 to an A4 and vice versa, I do not think that there is a big difference there at all.

ACTING CHAIR—I think we have some consensus about that. I would like to know where the paper comes from and the merits or otherwise of recycled paper—the advantages and disadvantages. Can the industry respond to that question and then perhaps others?

Mr Daniel—A good proportion of the white paper that is called offset grade or bond that we buy is produced in Australia, either in Burnie or Maryborough.

ACTING CHAIR—What is the proportion? Can you give us a percentage?

Mr Daniel—It is probably 60 or 70 per cent. But while there is a proportion of coated stock—for instance, art papers made in Australia—it is predominantly imported. We do not make any coated art paper in Australia that is recycled. One of the other things with recycled paper is that overseas they tip what they call ‘broke’ back in. Broke is paper that has been made but does not meet specification, and they classify that as recycled. In Australia if we tip broke back in it is not counted as recycled, so we have a different way of determining what is recycled from the way the rest of the world does it.

ACTING CHAIR—Are most of the reports coated or uncoated?

Mr Daniel—They are coated.

ACTING CHAIR—Using imported paper.

Mr Daniel—I would say the majority of it is.

ACTING CHAIR—Is there a particular reason why it has to be coated?

Mr Daniel—If you are printing colour you will get greater ink hold-out, so the ink stands up and the job looks a lot nicer. You do not get that from offset paper. The sheet actually absorbs the ink. That is the main reason.

Mr ADAMS—Is there any evidence to support the notion that colour and more illustrations improve the readability of reports? I guess there is, isn’t there, but maybe not with the majority of documents? What do you think? John, you have been pretty quiet, and you have a lot of experience.

Mr Lockwood—Quite a few years ago now fiction novels and what have you were printed in a pale green colour to be easier on the eyes. I do not know whether that really worked or not, but at the time it was very popular to print in a subdued ink. That does not help as far as colour goes.

Mr ADAMS—We have heard about washing out. Is that a technique to get you to look at the page, or does that lift it? What does that do? Is that a graphic thing to improve the look of the page?

Mr Wilson—It can be. You should never ask a graphic designer these questions.

Mr ADAMS—Why do we do these things? That is what I am trying to find out.

Mr Wilson—We do them to make them look pretty! It can be done for many reasons. It can be used to illustrate a point or it can be used as a decorative feature. It is mainly for those two reasons. If it is used to illustrate a point then it needs to be clear and obvious. If you are using it as a texture or a design feature then you want to keep it as that so that it does not detract from the

text or the readability of it. The whole idea is communication, and if you cannot read it there is no point.

Mr ADAMS—You do not get the message.

Mr Wilson—That is exactly right. In some respects adding colour to a document is good because it breaks up what can be a very dense and heavy amount of text. If it is a very technical document, for instance, and there is a lot of ink on the page, colour is quite good to break things up and alleviate what would otherwise be pages and pages of black.

Mr ADAMS—Most of us read a fair bit of pretty dull paper. Do you add colour to your documents because that makes the department look better when it goes out?

Mr Wilson—No.

Mr ADAMS—People could say, ‘I feel good about this and the department will be seen in a good light.’ Say the department won a prize. That would be terrific stuff. Is that the reason, or is it about readability and people gaining knowledge? What about putting colours into graphs? You are dealing with statistics, statistics, bloody statistics and lies—whoever said that.

Ms Barbour—It wasn’t me!

Mr ADAMS—Graphs can stand out better in colour, and I guess I would concede that you can get a message across on some occasions—depending on the complexity of the message.

Ms Barbour—If you ask for evidence around that, I cannot give you evidence, but I can say that, anecdotally—

Mr ADAMS—That will do.

Ms Barbour—people do say that it is more readable if it is in colour and that they can understand the graph, obviously, better if it is in colour. You can see it visually straightaway without necessarily looking at the legends below it.

Ms Collins—We find with our time series data, in particular, that if you can use a particular colour to represent a year it is quite easy for the reader then to pick up the year of interest that they are looking at in the graph. We would also have some anecdotal evidence—

Mr ADAMS—No scientific evidence?

Ms Collins—we do not have any scientific evidence; sorry—to suggest that the use of colour does help the reader.

Mrs Boulter—It is also about the perception of the organisation. Our annual report is not only used for parliamentary purposes. It is also about positioning the organisation with potential sponsors and corporate organisations, which is very important if they are going to fund things that we are involved in. They need to see us as a credible supplier of those things; therefore

having a high-quality document obviously helps with that. It is not just about colour; it is about the way it is designed and those sorts of things. It is the overall perspective of the person.

Mr ADAMS—The Australian Institute of Sport have apologised because they could not be here. They are an organisation that would want to have a little colour in what they are saying, too, in positioning themselves.

Mr Neame—Whilst our industry association does not have any hard evidence to support the proposition that people prefer to read colour over black and white, I am sure we could draw the comparison with private sector organisations and major annual reports of those organisations. I suspect that, if we had a look at those, there would not be too many that were only in black and white or two colours. Annual reports and a lot of documents are used not only for their readability but also—to support some of the comments from around the table—for positioning and for prestige. Certainly as an association we support the proposition that there should be a world with print and plenty of colour in it rather than a world without print.

Mr ADAMS—Your annual report must be pretty special—the printers' report!

Mr Neame—It is indeed.

Mr ADAMS—We should get a copy of that, I guess.

Mr Neame—Yes.

Mr Logan—I will make two comments. One goes to the heart of whether we produce one report or more than one. If we were to produce an annual report in colour but were required to produce one as per the guidelines, you would have, I think, quite unnecessary cost associated with that—assuming that we all put our documents online on the web. We cannot provide a single-colour graph for the printed copy and expect that to translate to the web. It would not. You would have to change the make-up of the graph from matt dots, lines et cetera; whereas with colour you could very easily explain, be it a pie chart or any number of graphs.

The other point is that the annual reports are produced for the parliament—that is the absolute necessity and essence of the annual report—but we do not hide the fact that we also want journalists, our stakeholders and members of the public to read them. There are not too many newspapers or members' newsletters that go out to their electorates and constituents that are in black and white these days—that do not have some element of colour in them. We need to acknowledge that colour is a very important part of getting the message across.

ACTING CHAIR—I want to draw this part to a conclusion because we have four other key areas to discuss: environmental issues, electronic access to the reports, value for money generally and how that is measured, and finally, what the non-compliance measures should be, if any.

Ms McClelland—Readability is essentially to do with the complexity of the language—word and sentence length; those sorts of matters. It is a little difficult to have evidence that colour and illustrations improve readability, but it certainly adds interest to a document and would probably promote a reader's interest and keep them reading the document. I think the majority of annual

reports include some use of photographs and it would be arguable to say that that use is essential to a better understanding of the text, which is what the current standards require.

Mr May—We need to be mindful that our target audience is not of the same age group as some of our more senior members. When I grew up we were lucky to see colour in a magazine. It probably happened for the first time in the 1960s. In the 1940s colour was not available in magazines, so those of us who are younger than those who were born in the 1930s are more attuned to colour. Certainly the Gen Xs and Ys of today will not look at anything that does not have colour and movement, and any guidelines that we might look at in relation to colour should be mindful of the changing demographic of the reader. It is probably correct to say, too, that colour does not necessarily enhance readability, but layout does. Row on row of single colour printing is probably not the ideal layout to keep the reader attracted for anything more than about two minutes unless they have a specific purpose for reading that particular document.

ACTING CHAIR—I will kick off environmental issues and then pass to other members of the committee to ask questions. The first and obvious question is the guideline regarding recycled paper and its suitability for archival requirements. That is set down in the requirements of 30 January 2004 that we already have. I would then like to get your feedback on whether there is a record of the number of reports that are printed, whether you keep any records of unused reports and whether you regularly reassess your printing requirements. We will start with the recycled paper being deemed by the National Archives of Australia to be unsuitable for archival requirements. That requirement is from January 2004 and technology changes.

Mr Daniel—One of the big problems with archival qualities is that in recent times we have moved to what they call alkaline sizing. When the paper is sized with an alkaline base it does not react with the fatty tissue that you have in your hands, and that is what causes the sheet to break up and fall apart over periods of years. I would suggest, too, that that archival quality is in almost every grade of paper you buy today because they have gone away from bleaching, which is the way they used to do it, and they are now sizing them with alkaline. That has made a huge difference to what you would call archival papers. So the average paper you buy off the floor today, especially in offsets, are all alkaline sized. They say that they are guaranteed for anywhere from 100 to 250 years. I do not think any of us will be worrying about that.

ACTING CHAIR—Have you raised that issue with the National Archives office?

Mr Daniel—No.

ACTING CHAIR—Is there any other feedback on that guideline? Do most people agree with Mr Daniel?

Mr Wilson—In all the years of annual report producing that I have done for the department, which is about nine now, I have not used recycled paper for the very reason that it is classified as non-archival. The other thing is that it generally tends to be more expensive because it falls into the category of a specialty paper, and specialties are generally more expensive to produce. When you do an annual report of the size that we do, it would be incredibly cost prohibitive.

ACTING CHAIR—Do you have figures on that?

Mr Wilson—No, I do not. I just know from experience that they are substantially more expensive.

ACTING CHAIR—Do you agree with Mr Daniel's comment about the National Archives guidelines?

Mr Wilson—I do. It is improving all the time. Most papers now are acid free, are they not, David?

Mr Daniel—They are acid free—

Mr Wilson—Their archival qualities have increased dramatically. It would be something that is worthwhile bringing up with them.

ACTING CHAIR—That is perhaps something that we could raise with them in the future. Is there any other feedback on that particular guideline before we go to the number of reports that are used?

Mr May—The fact that paper is recycled does not necessarily make it environmentally sound in relation to other papers which may be sourced from renewable resources such as plantation forests, or whatever. As David alluded to earlier, overseas waste paper called broke gets tossed into recycled papers. God knows where it comes from, how it was originally manufactured or where it was sourced. There is no real control over where recycled paper is actually sourced, so it could be from anywhere. There are a number of other industry standards to do with environmental soundness. There is the international standard ISO 14001, which relates to environmental practices in production; there is a European standard called EMAS, which takes ISO 14001 a little further; and some countries—such as Japan and Korea—have their own versions of EMAS. There is a process called FSC, which stands for Forestry Stewardship Council, which deals with the full chain of custody from growth through to production and distribution. A number of Australian merchants are FSC accredited, which indicates that they are sourcing all their stock from environmentally sound sources.

Naturally within those particular accreditations there is some degree of variation. For example, something that is FSC may declare that it has sourced its raw materials from 50 per cent renewable resources; others may be 100 per cent. There is a wider range of papers that are environmentally sound than just recycled paper. Given that full range, particularly in the commodity stocks, there is the standard A2 coated stocks and matt or gloss stocks. Just about everything that is brought into Australia is ISO 14001 accredited. There are a number which are EMAS accredited, or its equivalent in Japan and Korea et cetera, and there are a number of them which have FSC accreditation as well. I think we need to be mindful that 'recycled' is not necessarily the answer and that all these other papers which are accredited can all be recycled in due course. They are pretty well all archival quality and they can be recycled in due course to produce office copier paper without having to go to a particular recycled stock to be able to say that we are environmentally friendly.

ACTING CHAIR—Does your industry have guidelines for environmentally friendly paper and do you have any recommendations to printers or departments that may wish to use environmentally paper?

Mr May—Yes. Most of the merchants produce a chart with qualities of their various stocks. I am sure David's sales reps, all have access to that—certainly mine do—and the paper merchants are only too happy to supply those to any designer that asks for them.

Mr ADAMS—Maybe we could have the committee get some for this report?

Mr May—Yes.

ACTING CHAIR—We will take that on notice. Is there any other feedback on that issue? How many reports do you do? Do you keep a record of that and do you reassess your printing needs regularly? If so, how do you do it?

Ms McClelland—Yes, we certainly do monitor our requirements and review the printing runs. We take into account the requirements for last year's report and any stock remaining and we review the numbers. About half our reports are produced for general parliamentary purposes and the others for other purposes. I am sure that most agencies would do similar sorts of things. We monitor the number of copies required for tabling in the parliament quite closely as well and, with electronic access, the numbers required for tabling purposes have come down. And the numbers required for the parliamentary papers series, as the committee would be aware, have come down.

Mr Pye—I concur with Robyn as far as annual reports are concerned. We certainly keep an eye on the numbers of reports that are required. In terms of our major documents, the reports of parliamentary committees, each committee secretariat keeps an eye on the numbers of reports that are produced. Again, obviously there are statutory obligations to meet, the parliament papers series and those sorts of things. Different committees find that the range of people interested in that committee's work tends to impact on the number of copies of reports that are required. A lot of inquiries have much wider public interest and more reports would be printed in those situations, whereas in cases where reports are designed to assist just the Senate in its consideration of legislation they are confined to a smaller audience and we adjust our print runs accordingly. Certainly one thing we think is very useful is the increased uptake of electronic access to reports. All parliamentary committee reports these days are put on the web more or less the instant they are tabled, and we like to think that that is increasingly the main gateway for people to access these reports—with the riders that this committee would be all too well aware of through the recent inquiry into the parliamentary papers series.

Mr Antmann—We do review the number of copies that we produce every year. We have noted a steady decrease. We have taken proactive measures to decrease the number of copies that we print, both for cost savings and because of the impact on the environment. We normally supply what is required for tabling and then the bare minimum number of copies required for distribution around the department. We are adopting a preference for the digital medium, providing them online, and we have mitigated the need for back issues by ensuring we have a back issue section on the internet where you can look at previous annual reports. So we are taking a proactive step to reduce the amount of printed material in favour of electronic.

ACTING CHAIR—Have you noticed that with the digital age in the last 10-plus years there has been a decrease in requirements from stakeholders and others for reports, or is that not necessarily so?

Mr Antmann—Not a decrease in the requirement of reports per se, but certainly there has been a decrease in the volume of reports printed. We have been monitoring the visitations to our electronic versions of annual reports and they are steadily increasing, so there would be an upward trend in the uptake of the electronic version.

Mr May—On the subject of electronic copies, yes, certainly they are valuable and becoming more so, particularly with the younger audience who are more attuned to reading from computer screens. My experience is that from an environmental perspective we are probably a bit clouded by the fact that a person will think, ‘Hey, I can download this PDF to my computer,’ but generally speaking the first thing people of my age group, and probably anybody who is 35 or older, are going to do is hit the print button and print the entire report on the office computer. That office computer is of dubious environmental value. Certainly it will use paper that is less environmentally sound than paper that would otherwise be used. So I think we need to be mindful that electronic is not the full answer. To go back to printing, if there is one particular section I want to read, it is more than likely that I am not computer literate enough to be able to print the pages I need. I will print the whole lot so that I can read the two pages that I need, or I might read the first three pages and then lose interest in it, because it is a boring document and I can only print it in black and white, and it goes in the bin. We should be mindful of that.

Mrs HULL—I could not agree more.

Mr May—Certainly anecdotal evidence from the industry’s perspective suggests print runs on annual reports are coming down. I dare say they are at a point now where they will not decrease much further. There may be some departments in which they do, but I think those that have already reduced their print runs probably have plateaued and that, if anything, the number will increase in time as the audience that requires a printed copy becomes wider.

Mrs HULL—If you look at the environmentally friendly aspects of printing and paper you may find print runs coming down according to the number of requests to the departments for copies, but the problem is that you download the report from the website. Today I have used four reams of paper to download documents for legislation purposes, simply because I do not have the time to sit in front of my computer and read through all of the memorandums of understanding, the legislation—all of those things. I am downloading far more now than I have ever downloaded.

Mr May—I will say something very quickly on the cost-effectiveness. As David will attest, it is more cost-effective to have a commercial printer print the extra 100 copies of the 50-page document that you require than to use your office copier. That probably has a cost of 10c to 12c per copy if it is on a service contract, or if it is just a copier that has been bought from, for example, Harvey Norman then the true cost including toner et cetera is probably closer to 20c or 25c per copy for an A4 page. Again, we need to be mindful that just because the initial bill is lower that does not necessarily mean that the total cost is lower.

Ms Fisher—In terms of numbers of copies, print runs and so forth, we do keep a careful eye on the numbers of copies we print each year, but we are finding that the demand for printed copies of our *State of the service report* is increasing. As I mentioned before, this is the report that has a significant number of charts, graphs and tables in it. The numbers of that report, the printed report, are increasing.

ACTING CHAIR—Why?

Ms Fisher—It could be due to a number of factors. We have worked very hard on trying to improve the quality of that report in recent years. It is becoming more well known as a useful tool across the service and, as I have mentioned before, internationally as well. It must be that as people are becoming more aware of it the demand is increasing.

Ms Ferranda—Something that tends to be forgotten at times is that the internet also has a role to play in increasing the number of copies that are requested. Previously, a lot of people were not familiar with committee reports and annual reports and did not know what was available in the government sphere. They are finding out about these reports on the internet. They may be printing them off but equally they may turn around and request a printed copy of the report because they realise that it is a worthwhile report, that it has some validity for them and so on. That in itself has a role to play in increasing the demand for certain reports. As Kieran said, perhaps the print runs have more or less plateaued—we have gotten them down as far as we can and now people are more aware of what is out there and are still requesting copies of reports.

ACTING CHAIR—Do you have copies of reports available, and do you send them to people upon request and at no cost?

Ms Ferranda—We certainly maintain stocks of both committee reports and government reports produced in the past. If someone requests a back copy and we have it available, we do make it available to them. We also have a parallel project, if I can call it that; we are digitally imaging our tabled papers. We have microfilm from 1901-2001. It will be converted to digital image and will be available for anyone to access on the internet, in any case, so people will be able to access back documents; but if they want a printed copy and if we still have some stock left we will certainly make it available.

ACTING CHAIR—I assume that is the same for the House of Representatives?

Ms McClelland—We certainly provide back copies of committee reports and their documents.

ACTING CHAIR—What policies do the departments have for minimising waste and, secondly, for dealing with being environmentally friendly departments? Are there any particular initiatives you undertake or put in place?

Mr Logan—We have a stakeholder list for the annual report that we regularly review at six-monthly intervals. There is a general policy to encourage people to use the web. We print about 1,300 or so annual reports a year. We are trying to bring that down to encourage those who might have only a passing interest in it to use the web. We maintain a stakeholder list and we update it at regular intervals—not just for the annual report but for a wide variety of material that we distribute.

ACTING CHAIR—Are there any other environmental issues that you want to raise before we close this section?

Mrs HULL—When you are considering the report stage, is there conscious thought about environmental concerns or not?

ACTING CHAIR—We are getting some nods, so is the consensus is yes?

Ms Ferranda—Yes.

Ms McClelland—Yes.

ACTING CHAIR—We are interested to know what specific issues you have. I think Kay Hull is asking you to take it on notice and let us know if you have any specific measures to deal with the environmental concerns.

Mrs Boulter—I can let you know of one. We chose to use uncoated stock for the precise reason that those that are not used in the previous edition can be recycled.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you. That feedback is appreciated.

Mrs HULL—I will ask this question basically to the printers: are you asked for or do you give quotes for more environmentally friendly outcomes of printing?

Mr Daniel—We are quite often asked to quote using soy based inks and we use soy based inks. They are inks made from a vegetable product and they are able to be put back into the ground, as opposed to petrochemical based inks. We predominantly use soy based inks today, which are environmentally friendly. Somebody might ask us to quote on a certain stock, and we offer them an alternative; we quote on what they would like and then we quote them on an alternative that is Australian made or recyclable, as opposed to using something that we believe would not be in the best interests of the environment.

Mrs HULL—Do you think it would be in their best interests for the departments to work out whether their reports could be prepared in a more environmentally friendly way, or not?

Mr Wilson—I would think so.

ACTING CHAIR—Mr Wilson thinks so. What does the industry say about that?

Mr May—It rolls back to the point I made earlier of involving the printers as an industry earlier in the piece. I will take Mrs Boulter's point that the job was printed on an uncoated stock because of environmental reasons and I suggest that that might not necessarily have been the sole solution on environmental grounds. It may still have been the best choice for any number of other reasons, but purely on environmental grounds there would have been other options available.

I will add to David's comment on the ink situation: there is also a situation with the varnishes that are in use today to seal the documents. There are two types of varnishes. One is the more environmentally friendly water based varnish, as opposed to the standard mineral based varnish. These are little things, we know.

As an industry, we have had a reputation in years gone by of being a dirty and smelly organisation with volatile organics in the air everywhere you walk. The industry has taken very positive steps over the last number of years to improve its environmental outcomes, suppliers are coming up with more environmentally-friendly alternatives to the older stuff and the industry has produced a document as a guideline for printers. I am sure that most printers with any sort of reputation, particularly in Canberra but also in the wider community, are endeavouring to improve their environmental credentials and are only too happy to pass on that knowledge to print buyers in the private or government sectors.

ACTING CHAIR—We will suspend for approximately 30 minutes and then we will be back at 12.35 sharp to conclude our efforts. I know we have touched on this already, but we will be looking at electronic access to the reports. We will look at the value for money and how you measure that, and we will look at non-compliance measures and their merit or otherwise.

Proceedings suspended from 12.06 pm to 12.36 pm

ACTING CHAIR—We will resume the roundtable discussion and go to the issue of electronic access to reports—unless anybody has a burning desire to share something else that they learnt over lunch; I am happy to receive that too, no problems at all. But electronic access to reports is obviously a key issue. The guidelines are silent on that matter, although the committee's 2006 report considered this area at some length. I think I am getting feedback that all departments produce their annual reports online and electronically—I can see nodding heads. Are there any other incentives or initiatives you undertake to make sure that your reports and papers are produced digitally or online? What about the permanent access of reports online; do you have measures to make that happen? Do you have any other comments in terms of the electronic world in which we now live? Maybe industry might want to kick it off, and then we will go from there.

Mr Neame—I will try and open the batting for the second time after lunch. Our association has made a concerted effort to ensure that people continue to enjoy printed matter in harmony with the electronic version. We were talking earlier about the cost effectiveness of having everything on the net and people wanting to download it and whether that was environmentally sensitive or appropriate, or economic. We undertook some modelling that we put in a submission to another committee that indicates that to have everything online and to allow people to download it is not sustainable. Along with everyone else, we share the view that the new electronic age is with us, so we need to be able to transpose printed documents into a PDF version to place onto the internet so that people can share that information across a wider audience.

ACTING CHAIR—That makes good sense. Is there any other feedback on the electronic reporting?

Ms Fisher—We have our previous year's annual report online and we also have a number of previous years in the archive section of our website. But we do make available all previous copies of the *State of the service report* online.

Mr Antmann—We undertake a separate activity for the publication online of the annual report. In addition to, obviously, having the PDF version, which is uploaded, we develop a

website in its own right with the annual report broken down into its composite parts. Web statistics would show that the users of this site do actually know what they are looking for. They are coming to go to a specific chapter of the annual report rather than coming to simply browse the annual report in its entirety. That means that, instead of needing to download the entire document, you can browse to a particular page, print that specific page or email that page to someone else, obviously having a PDF of that specific section that you are looking at available as a related link for downloading. We undertake that initiative. That seems to have been quite popular in the uptake. As I said, the trends for visitation there are increasing. As far as the workload is concerned, currently we use a platform—Dreamweaver—to do that, but it is a standard HTML website. It takes approximately six days in total to develop this, which is, I am reliably informed, the same sum total time that it takes the graphic designers to lay out the print version of the annual report in total.

Ms Barbour—We also put our annual reports online. We have obviously not been around long enough to say that we have archived any. They are all there at the moment because we are on to our third year only. We do convert it to HTML, which is another cost when you have not got that in-house service.

ACTING CHAIR—You outsource that, do you?

Ms Barbour—Yes, we do.

Mrs HULL—I understand the reason and the need to have it online, but I am also concerned at the amount of downloading that I do in my office to send reports out to constituents. If, for example, we had a certain amount in the parliamentary Table Office that was able to be accessed and we wanted to reorder another hundred or thousand or whatever copies—as with the red marker in a supermarket display—would that be extremely expensive?

Mr Daniel—It depends on how many colours it is done in and whether you want it printed offset or digitally. We print most of the black-and-white publications digitally, and you could print as many as five or 10, or up to 300 or 400. If you were going to go over 300 or 400—if you had the need for that many more—we would put it back on the press and reprint it. It would probably cost you about the same amount—marginally less to have it reprinted in a larger amount than it did the first time. It is dearer for digital copies, so the cost per unit is dearer. You can produce one book for \$10, for example, whereas you would have to print 500 books to get them at \$5. It depends on the quality you need and that type of thing.

We currently print all the legislation on behalf of the Attorney-General's Department. We warehouse that, we are left to make the decision on how many marketing copies we keep, and we top those up out of digital copies today. Since the closing of the Commonwealth government bookshops, which we managed for four years, we now warehouse and sell all those products online. In the last couple of years the sales have been increasing. This year they are really going well. It was not marketed properly. Most people did not take into account that you could buy a lot of that product. At the bottom of the Attorney-General's Department's SCALEplus website it says that if you require any of that legislation in a printed format it is available for purchase by dialling a 1300 number. I think that has helped immensely. People are not downloading huge amounts of legislation when they can buy it. We offer a same-day or next-day service, so, if you order from almost anywhere in Australia by two o'clock, it is mailed that day and you will get it

the next day. Most of those things help. But we do not print as many as we used to. We make a decision on the marketing copies, and if we run out we then digitally print some more—as few as 20.

Mrs HULL—Obviously some reports will be more sought after by the general public than others. There are going to be some basic reports that are not going to be generally sought after. When we have an inquiry that is pretty widespread—like the child custody report, which dealt with a fluid and ongoing issue—we run out of copies very quickly. It is still very sought after. I just wonder how much expense would be involved in reprinting.

Mr Daniel—It would depend on how many you printed the first time and how many you were going to do the second time. If you were going to print exactly the same amount, you would probably go back and offset print it again.

Mr May—To reinforce what David said, if the print job is going to have exactly the same specifications as the original, your cost would be pretty much the same. However, if you needed 10 copies then the digital option might be the more appropriate option, at a lower cost. Your per unit cost would be higher but the overall cost would be lower. As a ballpark figure, for 200 copies of a 100-page report, it would be borderline as to whether you would do it digitally or by offset. Once you get to offset, your per unit cost is much lower. You might print 500 for \$5,000, and you would print 600 for \$5,500. With digital printing, whether you do one copy or 100 copies, your per unit cost might be \$15. Those figures that I am tossing around are very broad estimates and probably bear no relation to the truth, other than to illustrate the point that digital printing, particularly in colour, is much more expensive per page than a long run of offset printing.

Mr Postai—To try and understand the true cost of any printed products that might require what they call run-ons, which are additional to the original print run, those costs can be sustained in the original quote. For example, if we were looking at a publication that might require additional printing, it would be a good point at that stage to get the printers, the designers, the project managers or whoever it might be to look at quoting for run-ons. For example, we might get a quote for a run-on of 500 or 1,000. That way, we are then certain of the exact cost that will be incurred on any project.

Mrs HULL—Can I ask the departments: is it common practice to do that if you think that a report is going to be sought after or something that might create a lot of interest?

Mr Antmann—Yes, we do that commonly with the annual report and almost every other publication that we produce in the department. We do get quotes on run-ons.

Mrs HULL—Is that a requirement?

Mr Antmann—Not that I am aware.

Mr Logan—It is just good business practice.

ACTING CHAIR—There is a lot of nodding going on, indicating no.

Mrs HULL—It is not a requirement?

Mr Logan—It is not a requirement.

Mr May—To clarify, that run-on cost—the cost to produce extra copies at the time of the original printing—expires the day the order is placed or the day that the job goes on the press. With offset printing, the major cost is the set-up of each particular print run. It has cost us nearly as much to print 1,000 copies on a print run as it does to print 1,200 copies, because we have still got that one set-up cost. The difference between 1,000 and 200 is probably half a minute in running time for the press. If you have a run-on cost of 200 initially and you decide six months later that you want those 200 copies, that run-on price no longer applies; you go back to your original quote to work out your cost. At that stage 200 copies may be cheaper to do digitally.

ACTING CHAIR—I am happy to take your input, but we need to look at the value for money issue and the consequences of non-compliance with guidelines. The government expects departments to obtain value for money. That was set out in the guidelines in 2004. I would like to know from the participants around the table how you measure value for money.

Mr Pye—I have no idea how one would define value for money, but I think that an important factor as far as the guidelines are concerned is that value for money should be judged across the entire printing process—right from the design stage through to the physical printing and the process of converting, where necessary, documents to be put online. It is worth considering the full gamut of processes that are associated with the reporting practice when you are looking at those. Mr Acting Chair, you suggested that the guidelines are silent on electronic publication, but there is a general expectation with annual reports from departments and agencies that they will be available online. The processes that are involved in either converting extant documents to put them online or in designing a document from its earliest stages so that it can be produced in various formats are worthwhile taking into account.

ACTING CHAIR—That is a very good point.

Mr Lockwood—Value for money cannot just be judged in dollar value either. It includes service from the printers and turn around time. If you have a good working relationship with the printers they will often include converting documents to CDs so that they can be put online or they will swallow the cost of the initial print run. I do not think that you can put a dollar value on it necessarily.

ACTING CHAIR—We are not the experts. We are interested to know how you can measure the timeliness, the relationship with the printer and the issue of making electronic copies as well. There must be criteria that you would at least have in your minds, or on paper, to measure value for money, so you have made a good point, Mr Lockwood.

Ms Barbour—Usually selection criteria are put in place, which might differ between departments or procurement process. So you have a set of criteria that you judge the procurement process through. One of the important things is to get referees' opinions on how they dealt with the people last year and what they thought of the quality of the work.

ACTING CHAIR—We would be interested to see that criteria. Could you take that on notice? If any other agencies would like to share that with us we would appreciate it.

Mr Neame—Our members often ensure that they have a relationship with government departments in accordance with the government procurement guidelines. One of the issues we are always trying to address with our members is the interpretation of value for money in the Commonwealth government procurement guidelines and whether value for money is the cheapest. Or is it a whole chain-of-service delivery, as was indicated by one of the folk at the table. From our perspective, as an industry association speaking on behalf of our members, it becomes a very subjective area. Again I suggest that it is part of a whole procurement process of people understanding what value for money is in the context of print procurement. I am not sure if that answers the question. At the end on the day we have to comply with what the government departments provide to us, and I am sure that they have to comply with the government procurement guidelines.

ACTING CHAIR—You have raised some good points.

Mrs HULL—In life you pay for what you get. You can repair a car to the guidelines, but it might not be roadworthy after you have done it.

Mr Neame—Earlier in the discussion some of our members mentioned the timeliness with which they are required to read a proof, send it back to a government department and then print it. Kieran alluded to the cost of overtime and a whole range of other areas that the printers are providing to ensure that they deliver the service at the quality that the government departments want and that they want to deliver to them. This is a consideration in a value for money debate.

Mrs HULL—I think that is exactly right. I was just asked about the cost of preparation of my newsletter as opposed to the cost of another member's newsletter—but theirs is still waiting at the printer's four weeks after being submitted and mine is out with the consumer. I can put changes through. I can change the whole format overnight, email it back to him and it is emailed back to me next morning, but the other member said that his was still waiting at the printer's four weeks later. As I said, mine is out with the consumer.

ACTING CHAIR—We hope with the desired result.

Mrs HULL—We do. You are right. The question that was asked of me was: what is value for money? For me, value for money is to have the connection of turnaround time, attention to detail, layout and the way it is set out. When I look at something and I have to change it all because it is all over the place, it is costly for me as well. But it would be interesting—

Mr Daniel—Did you give the other member your printer's business card and name?

Mrs HULL—It would be interesting, though, to get a bit of an understanding as to what departments consider is value for money when they are procuring.

Mr Tomlin—I take the point about turnaround times. When it comes to our *State of the service report* or annual report, like most agencies we are under significant time pressures. We would seek three competitive quotes from a number of different companies, but we would ask

them to specify their best possible turnaround time. That would be a consideration that we would put into our decision on value for money: whether they were seeking the traditional 10 working days turnaround time or whether they could possibly achieve it within three or five working days.

ACTING CHAIR—That is a good point. Are you all in the habit of getting three quotes or does it depend on the product?

Ms Barbour—It is usual practice that you get three quotes for every procurement process, as a rule.

ACTING CHAIR—I see nodding around the table.

Ms McClelland—We take into account criteria such as quality, timeliness, responsiveness, understanding of our requirements and quality of the binding. It is certainly not just cost. An understanding of our requirements and, if you like, our relationships is very important.

Mr May—I want to follow up on Mr Tomlin's comment on requesting the best turnaround time on a quote. As a printer I find it an impossible requirement. Firstly, I do not know the urgency of the job. I do not know if the job is going to be required in two days or whether I am going to be allowed two weeks to do the job. The turnaround time will dictate, to some extent, my pricing if I know I can leisurely schedule the print job for my very expensive offset printing press—bearing in mind that no printer that I know of has their press standing idle waiting for the next print job that was quoted for three weeks ago that might be needed in three days. If you ask me the best turnaround time for any job, I will tell you it is overnight. Then if you ask me what price it is and you really want it overnight, I will tell you the price is \$10,000. If you are quite happy to wait two weeks, I might tell you the price is \$5,000.

Again, those numbers are a bit rubbery but illustrate the point that things do not just happen out of the blue. Often we may quote a job where the quote is valid for 30 days and six weeks later we are presented with the artwork, and we are expected to hold that price. We are then told, 'We want the job in three days' and that becomes an impossibility. It may be that my press is already fully booked for those three days, it may be that the price of paper has gone up in that six weeks—a number of other things could have happened. It comes back to my earlier point that, when a quote is sought, it needs communication with the printer on exactly what the needs are, whether the main criterion is absolute spotless quality or whether the job is to be turned around overnight or delivered in Brisbane in six weeks time. When a printer has all that information, a printer can give an accurate indication of price and whether the time line can be met. Again, it relies on a little more than, 'Hey, let's get three quotes' and 'Tell us your best turnaround time.'

Mr Logan—It is fairly apparent that value for money is a subjective judgement, but it takes into account all of the factors that we are hearing today—from timeliness to previous experience to total person hours to actually get the job done through to cost and competitive pricing. But at the end of the day, value for money is a decision that you have to make as a manager of public funds wanting to achieve an outcome that meets both requirements as well as getting the publication out. I suspect that that applies right across Public Service practice in terms of purchasing practice.

ACTING CHAIR—Could we go to the issue of sanctions for non-complying agencies. Before we announced and advertised this hearing, were all agencies aware of the guidelines? I can see some of you nodding. Were some of you not aware of the guidelines? Was everyone fully aware?

Mr Logan—Not fully aware. I am more aware now.

ACTING CHAIR—You are being very diplomatic. Are there agencies that are not aware of the guidelines, or are they all aware?

Mr Lockwood—Probably all agencies are aware of it, but whether they are conversant with it is another thing.

Mrs HULL—There is the award issue. It puts those people who do not comply at a distinct advantage over those who do comply.

Mr Logan—John may be right, that all agencies are aware, but I am not convinced that all the key players in the agencies are aware. There is very high turnover in the communications, public affairs and media management areas of the Public Service. Notwithstanding that some of us have been in town and with various departments or in other guises for 20 or 30 years, here in this group there are also a lot of new players. There is a lot more contracting out, for example, of annual reports to an editor to coordinate. Whether the freelance editor is aware—let alone the person who is hiring the editor or who is normally supervising the editor's work—is debatable.

ACTING CHAIR—That point was made by the CSIRO in their submission: due to the staff turnover. It was their view that they needed reminding, as did other departments, of the guidelines. It sounds like that may be a view that we should note.

Mrs HULL—If the criteria stated that for every publication the guidelines had to be forwarded to (a) the editor, (b) the printer or (c) everybody in the chain of command all the way through the process, would that be overkill?

Mr Lockwood—I think if there were key points of the guidelines in there, rather than the guidelines themselves—which are half an inch thick—

Mrs HULL—Yes, that is what I mean—just the key points about what is expected from the process. For example, we might change 'full colour' to 'You can have full colour but only under certain circumstances' or 'You can apply full bleeding'—or something like that. If there were a process such as that, then everybody who is involved with the report would be clear about the process that has to be undertaken.

Mr May—As printers, we print what we are given. For us to have input into what does not meet guidelines is a bit late. All those issues should be resolved before design commences.

Mrs HULL—But if we were to come up with a new set of regulations for full colour, the printer needs to know as well that this is not within the guidelines of their job.

Mr May—If at the concept stage printers were asked for an opinion, then I would certainly give an opinion. But at the stage where the product has been designed and pretty well signed off, everybody who should have had input in the decision has had input. If we were turn around at that stage and say, ‘This doesn’t meet guidelines,’ I guess the short shrift would be, ‘Too late. It’s done.’ All you need to do is print it. I do not think it is appropriate for the printing industry to be involved under those circumstances.

Mrs HULL—With respect, though, if this committee were to look at changing the guidelines to say that, at a particular stage of the process, the printer is to be consulted as to the value for money as to what was intended—

Mr May—I am sure that each individual printing company and their representatives who liaise with the departments would be more than happy to contribute to the process in discussion. Certainly if they were asked, ‘Does this meet guidelines?’ I am sure David’s representatives in particular would know for certain whether it does or it does not. But, because we are at the end of the process, generally when we get the information about the job the decisions have already been made. Certainly there are situations where we may be able to contribute, but I think that if there were an expectation that printers would say, ‘Hey, we’ve got the artwork and this does not meet guidelines,’ it is probably a little bit unreasonable to expect that to happen at that stage—bearing in mind that there would have been probably 100 hours combined with designers, editors et cetera, who have all had input into that particular document at the preproduction stage. At that stage, pretty well everything should have been decided, I would have thought.

ACTING CHAIR—Those are management issues.

Mr Lockwood—The onus should not be on the printers; it should have been sorted long before it got to the printers. At the moment, the printer is always at dollar-losing end. If anything goes wrong in the process it is nearly always the printers who get blamed in the end.

ACTING CHAIR—We want them ‘dollar making’.

Mr Daniel—So do we.

ACTING CHAIR—Mr Adams, did you have a question?

Mr ADAMS—No, I was just saying that is a management issue.

Mrs HULL—I am sorry, Mr Acting Chair: the reason for the inquiry is to determine how we can make it better and how we can get a more consistent set of guidelines. My view is that there should be some changes recommended out of this inquiry, because I think that evidence has come forward today that now lifts the fog and gives us a clearer picture of exactly how this is all done. My view would be that you should have procurement guidelines for everybody in the process, but you must have the same set of guidelines. You would have to at least advise your client if something is not going to meet the procurement guidelines as delivered.

Mr Neame—I hear what you are saying. As an industry association, we would be pleased to work with the committee and whoever is necessary to ensure that there is a complete understanding through the whole flow, from concept to print. We can make some sort of

contribution to that if the committee believes that that is appropriate or necessary in order to move forward into some new guidelines. We would be happy to be a partner in that process.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you. That is very much appreciated. The obvious question is: what happens if there is a breach of the guidelines? What is your feedback on sanctions or responses, if any?

Mr Pye—I think it depends on the nature of the breach, as these things always do. It seems to me that, if a decision were made to continue with the B5 sizing of the parliamentary papers series, for instance, and an agency decided to use an unusual paper format or size, there really would be no choice but to require some sort of reprinting or to reprint it ourselves and put the cost back on the agency responsible. But I do not know that there is too much to be gained by requiring a reprint of documents in other circumstances, because that is only going to add to the taxpayers' burden in this area. The question of value for money always comes back into it. Dare I say that the subjectivity that we have all talked about around the table is one of those things that comes under a phrase we use in the department sometimes: 'the estimates test'. If the question of value for money is something that people have a concern over then it is a matter that could be raised in the parliament during estimates hearings. Senate committees do have an automatic reference of annual reports under their portfolio areas that are considered by those committees, and it may well be that a few well-chosen, well-crafted questions at an estimates hearing will do much more than any other sort of chastisement that you might imagine to make the following year's annual report a little bit better in terms of value for money.

Mr ADAMS—More power to the publications committee. We want power to do things.

Mr Pye—As long as it does not corrupt.

Mr ADAMS—Of course.

ACTING CHAIR—Absolute power corrupts—we know that, and we are not seeking that. Is there any other feedback on that? Otherwise, I would like to go to a general open session and go around the table to get any feedback on the terms of reference or any other comments that you would like to make to the committee before we wrap up today. I would like to give everyone an opportunity to make that contribution before I make a closing statement. So perhaps we could go around the table. Do you have any comments, closing statements or other general submissions to the committee before we close our hearing?

Mr Logan—Thank you for the opportunity today. I have found it quite useful, and I will take away a number of ideas. We would want to reiterate the importance of full colour in documents such as annual reports and reports to the parliament. We think that is contemporary; it is current best practice in the publishing industry. It certainly adds, from my portfolio's perspective, a level of depth that we might not otherwise be able to achieve with less than full colour. On the issue of sanctions we are ambivalent. I am not sure that a name-and-shame approach is the way to go. Clearly there has to be an accountability mechanism. I am not sure what has been the case in the past, but, with only 50 per cent of publications that were audited by the committee meeting the requirements and the guidelines, clearly there are many of us who are not in accordance with those guidelines. If by modifying the guidelines we can be compliant, that would be an outcome we would seek.

CHAIR—Thank you for that. As you are thinking about your closing statements, please remember that if you have any additional comments after we close our meeting you can forward them through to the committee. We would be more than happy to receive them.

Mrs Boulter—In reference to Mr Pye's comments on the sanctions, I think that is probably a good approach to take. In reference to the use of colour and illustrations, we support the use of both colour and illustrations, primarily because they are very helpful for us in the sorts of activities we do as a planning authority.

Ms Fisher—I would like to reiterate the points that have been made round the table about the use of colour. Having the flexibility to use colour more extensively for the charts, tables and diagrams would help us to make the *State of the service report* document much more understandable. One point I have not made previously is that our own annual report also incorporates the Merit Protection Commissioner's annual report. We do like to use bleeding to distinguish a report that is incorporated within another. I know that does make printing slightly more problematic, but it is exceedingly useful to have that option for those sorts of reports. We would like to retain that.

We are not in favour of any sanctions for noncompliance. They are guidelines, and we would prefer to have not an overly proscriptive approach but an approach that would give us a degree of flexibility within overall principles. I think those are all the points I want to make.

Mr Finlayson—We do not have a particular problem with the guidelines as they are at the moment. We find that we can work quite well within those guidelines. However, we do accept the arguments being put around the table that there are some departments in which, for communications or marketing reasons, full colour might be an advantage.

I do not know that we would support sanctions as such, but I think there probably does need to be some way of ensuring that the guidelines are complied with, because it is a bit unfair if some departments apply those and adhere to those and others do not. I am not quite sure how you get around that problem.

Mrs Cameron—I agreed with David. Treasury is quite happy with the guidelines at the moment and can work readily with the two-colour options, and I would not agree with having sanctions.

Ms McClelland—In relation to the guidelines, an essential thing is that they need to be complied with. If in fact there is a degree of widespread noncompliance, I think that is something the committee needs to have regard to in considering the guidelines. The fact is that, in the very wide range of documents that are presented to the parliament, as I have said before, nearly all documents do comply with the guidelines in respect of use of colour and illustrations. So our focus today on annual reports is really on the small but extraordinarily important area which does get into the realm of noncompliance. I said that perhaps there could be some greater flexibility in relation to the wording 'essential for proper understanding', which relates to the use of colour and illustrations. Having said that, the majority of the documents presented to the parliament do in fact comply with the current guidelines in this area.

Mr May—The printers in Canberra have gone to great expense over the last 10 years to move to and update technology, which is designed to bring the cost of printing across the board to a significantly more affordable level. That lends itself to enhanced value for money regardless of whether we are using single-colour printing, two-colour printing, full-colour printing or even significantly more colours than that in a particular job.

As to the involvement with the printers, I alluded earlier to the fact that the printers usually get involved only at the last minute when projects are being finalised. We prefer that the printer should be selected earlier in the piece. They can then be involved in the process. However, ultimate responsibility for meeting the standards must rest with the project manager, and that project manager, naturally, will consult with whoever they feel is necessary to achieve the answer they are looking for. From our perspective, the more that government and the participants in government understand value for money, as outlined by many contributors today, the better. When printers understand that they are going to be paid value for the contribution they make, rather than being expected to cut their price to the bones to produce an outcome, the printers will be more involved in the process and will be able to continue to afford to update technology as it comes onto the market. In turn, that will present more value for money for government.

ACTING CHAIR—Ms Tink, do you want to make any contribution at this stage?

Ms Tink—We certainly support the use of colour photos as well. One of the things I think are important—and Mrs Hull talked about it before—are the IPAA and ARA awards. I am speaking purely from an annual report perspective, as opposed to other documents tabled. That is in contrast and pulls things back the other way. As you say, people get rewarded and awarded for not complying with the guidelines, and I think that is quite a tough thing for departments to face as well.

Mr Neame—Our association, having listened to the debate today, would be pleased to be involved with the committee and departments in discussing in more detail the environmental use of paper. We would be happy to help facilitate some forums and some workshops around that if the committee thought that would be a positive way to move. As I said earlier in my comments in relation to some guidelines, we would be happy to be involved in that process and partner the committee in helping to develop that.

Mr Daniel—We appreciate the opportunity to come along today. I hope we have been able to contribute.

ACTING CHAIR—It has been most appreciated.

Mr Pye—I think the Department of the Senate would be quite happy to see a bit more flexibility in the guidelines to enable, for instance, the judicious addition of some colour and some photographs and so on in committee reports, which we tend not to include at the moment. A point Robyn McClelland has been making for the House of Representatives is that we do not want to lose sight of the fact that the guidelines currently—and I do not remember the quote Robyn used—require that the addition of colour, graphs or photographs is essential to the proper understanding of the document. That seems to me to be a strong test but nonetheless I do not think we should go completely the other way; you still need the document to be value for money. If you do want to add colour, illustrations or photographs, they should nonetheless be added to

enhance the understanding and readability of the document. It should not just be, ‘Well, we’ve got the technology—’

Mrs HULL—So we can use it.

Mr Pye—Everybody remembers what happened to the internet six or eight years ago when suddenly everyone discovered how to make text flash or scroll across the screen. All of a sudden, every website in the land had flashing and scrolling text, but it did nothing to enhance the readability of the web. It is the same with printed documents: just because you have the ability to add many colours to a page and bleed material to the edges of the page does not mean you should. The value for money test is always one we are going to want to apply.

ACTING CHAIR—Some good points; thank you.

Ms Barbour—We are in support of using colour, especially for photos and graphs as I think I have mentioned before. We are not in support of sanctions, but I look forward to guidelines being more proactive than reactive. We have focused a lot on annual reports today—and I take your point that they are only a small percentage of publications—but there is a time frame the departments run to, so perhaps guidelines could be issued at the beginning of every calendar year when the departments start ramping up to do that. Because there is such a high turnover of staff, it might be valuable to have a reminder every year. I have also heard the printers talk about how they are not there at the beginning of a process, so perhaps in the guidelines we can talk a bit more about that. I recommend that we also talk to designers to understand the whole gamut of the process rather than just hearing from the printers, as I think that would be a useful conversation.

Mr Lockwood—I think there is one other problem with printing in general, not just the guidelines—that is, as Kieran said earlier, that print procurement officers often just come up through the ranks or get dropped into a job or whatever. They are only there for a few weeks or months and then move on, and they are not educated properly in what goes on. I spoke to Barry briefly during the recess, and he is quite willing for the industry association to conduct courses or workshops to try and educate people. I think it is a good idea. We have tried it with the department of industry and it has not really worked that well, mainly because people turn over so quickly, but I think it is a start to educate people. I do not think the printing industry should be used as police in following the guidelines. I do not think it is their responsibility—maybe, as I say, have some dot points so they are aware of the guidelines. It is not up to them to police it; it is up to the departments to get their act together and follow it from there.

Mr Antmann—I look forward to seeing the revised guidelines, if they are indeed revised, especially in accordance with broadening the scope of the use of colour and also any further guidelines on the environmental impact of publishing. I note that this inquiry is specifically looking at documents that are tabled in parliament. However, given that our department’s dedication is to try and reduce the environmental impact of publications more broadly and the tabled documents only constitute a very small proportion of the overall printed output of our department, I would be quite keen to see some guidelines which we might be able to apply more broadly.

Mr Wilson—My colleagues have pretty much summed up everything that I would like to say other than thanking you for the opportunity to be here and partake in this.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you for that. Just before we close: I spoke to the industry association at the lunchbreak, and I think the proposition of seminars, workshops and industry forums where there can be interaction with departmental agencies and industry representatives is a very good idea. I am sure the committee will consider that as well in terms of what part we might be able to play in either facilitating or encouraging such a process. I want to leave that on the record for you. I am sure the committee will think that through. We would like to encourage that, and we will certainly be coming back to you on that point. We thank you very much for your time today and for your input. It has been most valuable, and we look forward to deliberating over these matters. I should note that the transcript will be available electronically for anybody who may wish to read it in due course.

Resolved (on motion by **Mrs Hull**):

That this committee authorises publication, including publication on the parliamentary database, of the transcript of the evidence given before it at the public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 1.29 pm