

**FURTHER RESPONSE OF THE PRESIDING
OFFICERS TO THE REPORT OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS:**

**INQUIRY INTO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF A DIGITAL
REPOSITORY AND ELECTRONIC
DISTRIBUTION OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS SERIES**

June 2012

Inquiry into the development of a digital repository and electronic distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series

Further response of the Presiding Officers to the report of the Joint Committee on Publications

Introduction

On 24 June 2010 the Joint Committee on Publications tabled its report on its *Inquiry into the development of a digital repository and electronic distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series*.

The committee examined the feasibility of developing an electronic Parliamentary Papers Series.

The Parliamentary Papers Series (PPS) is 'a comprehensive collection of information that documents public policy formulation and administration of government since Federation'.¹ It includes all the documents of a substantial nature that have been tabled in either or both the Senate and the House of Representatives, such as parliamentary committee reports but also documents provided by the executive. Although the PPS includes papers prepared by and for the executive, it is administered by the Departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The committee made seven recommendations. All relate to the responsibilities of the Parliament. The Presiding Officers are pleased to provide a further response to those recommendations, following the government response to recommendation 5 (tabled on 15 September 2011) and the preparation of a business case.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that an electronic PPS be developed and implemented.

Agreed. The Presiding Officers agree that a basic electronic PPS be developed as soon as practical. In accordance with the business case, an easy to use web interface will follow and two additional stages investigated subsequently. The initial stage will result in access to the tabled documents through the APH website and will be ongoing from the date the series is implemented. The additional stages to be further investigated include digital access to other

¹ Parliamentary Joint Committee on Publications (2010), *Inquiry into the development of a digital repository and electronic distribution of the Parliamentary Papers Series*, p. 3. PP No. 160/2010

tabled papers and the back capturing of the documents which form the PPS to date.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the parliamentary departments undertake a business case to examine issues relating to the maintenance of electronic records and long-term archival requirements that would be required in developing an electronic PPS.

The recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the parliamentary departments develop a digital repository for the PPS based in the Parliament.

Agreed. The Presiding Officers note that while the digital repository is to be based in the Parliament, the responsibility for providing the information in a timely manner resides with the author agencies. The Presiding Officers note the AGIMO requirement for departments and agencies to ensure that the on-line versions of documents tabled in Parliament are identical to those that are posted on their websites. This existing requirement provides surety of the content of the documents to be included in the ePPS.

Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that a business case, referred to in recommendation 2, also include:

- *The scope for other tabled documents not in the PPS to be made available through the repository; and*
- *The costs placed on the parliamentary departments to provide the repository.*

The recommendation was implemented in the preparation of the business case.

Recommendation 5

The committee recommends that author departments and agencies be required to provide electronic copies of documents at the same time print copies are provided for tabling in the Parliament.

The Presiding Officers will ensure that electronic copies of documents prepared by either chamber department or the Department of Parliamentary Services, including parliamentary committees, are provided for inclusion in the ePPS.

It is noted that the government response to this recommendation indicates that the electronic documents will not be provided prior to tabling.

Recommendation 6

The committee recommends that a digital repository for the PPS be in production and accessible to users by early 2011, to coincide with the start of the 2011 PPS.

This recommendation could not be met.

Recommendation 7

The committee recommends that the chamber departments administer a digital repository for the PPS.

Agreed. The Presiding Officers support the administration of the digital repository for the ePPS by the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives.

The Presiding Officers note that the parliamentary departments have jointly considered the most cost effective means to introduce the new format and that it will use IT services supported by the Department of Parliamentary Services.