

2002

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

COMMITTEE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Report on the operations of the Committee for 2001

Committee of Members' Interests

Membership

39th Parliament

Hon A Somlyay MP (Chair)
Hon J A Crosio MBE MP (Deputy Chair)
Mr K J Andrews MP
Mr H A Jenkins MP
Mr P Neville MP
Mr P Nugent MP until 24 April 2001
Mr N O'Keefe MP

40th Parliament

Mr Barry Haase MP - Chair
Mr H A Jenkins MP - Deputy Chair
Mr P Lindsay MP
Mr P Neville MP
Mr H Quick MP
Mr C Thompson MP
Hon J A Crosio MP

Introduction

1. Under the provisions of standing order 329 by which the Committee is established, the Committee is required, as soon as practicable after each 31 December, to prepare and table in the House a report on its operations during that year.
2. This is the report of the Committee for the calendar year 2001.

Responsibilities of the Committee

3. Standing order 329 sets out the following terms of reference for the Committee:
 - (i) to inquire into and report upon the arrangements made for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of a Register of Members' Interests;
 - (ii) to consider any proposals made by Members and others as to the form and content of the register;
 - (iii) to consider any specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests;

- (iv) to consider what changes to any code of conduct adopted by the House are necessary or desirable;
- (v) to consider what classes of persons (if any) other than Members ought to be required to register and declare their interests; and
- (vi) to make recommendations upon these and any other matters which are relevant.

A report in accordance with these terms of reference follows.

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

4. No change was made to the arrangements by which the register is maintained. Since 1986 arrangements approved by the Committee provided that the register could be inspected, by appointment, between 10 am and 12 noon and 2 pm and 4 pm on working days in the office of the Registrar. In addition the Registrar may grant permission for the register to be inspected outside of those hours if the Registrar is satisfied that the circumstances surrounding the request warrant the exercise of such a discretion.
5. In total the register was inspected on Fifty-Two occasions during the year. Six of these inspections were made outside of the standard hours. These inspections take no account of the use of copies of statements of interests and notifications of alterations of interests tabled by the Chair and made available through the Table Office.
6. A Report on the Operations of the Committee for 2000 was tabled on 8 March 2001. Notifications of alteration of interests received during the period 6 December 2000 to 5 April 2001 were tabled on 5 April 2001. Notifications of alterations of interests received during the period 5 April 2001 to 27 June 2001 and a Statement of Registrable Interests were tabled on 28 June 2001. Notification of alterations of interests received during the period 5 July 2001 to 26 September 2001 and a Statement of Registrable Interests were tabled on 27 September 2001.
7. The Committee considered possible changes to facilitate access to details in the register. It agreed to two changes — that notifications of alterations should be printed in alphabetical order and that, in each new Parliament, when the Chair presents a copy of the completed declarations, the Chair also seek leave to table a copy of alterations received since the last tabling of alterations and before dissolution of the House.

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

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

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

9. During the year the Committee considered a complaint by a Member concerning declarations made by another Member. The Committee concluded that it had no evidence that the registration requirements had not been fulfilled.

Changes to any code of conduct

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

Registration of interests by other classes of person

10. The Committee did not agree to any proposal on this matter during 2001.

Other matters

11. The Committee confirmed that, from the start of the 40th Parliament, Members should be given access to the registration form in both electronic and hard copy form, Members then being able to complete their declarations using the electronic document, (although they would need to print-out and sign a hard copy for lodgment).

(B HAASE MP)

Chair

29 May 2002.