

## Sanctions for non-compliance

- 5.1 There are currently no sanctions for not adhering to the Standards. However, if a document does not meet the Standards, the author agency must bear any costs of reprinting the document to ensure its inclusion in the PPS.
- 5.2 In May 2006, the Committee presented its report on the distribution of the PPS. The report recommended, among other things, that the Standards be adhered to as this would lead to cost savings across the whole of government.
- 5.3 The Committee stated that it would monitor compliance with the Standards and report those agencies not adhering to them. This recommendation was supported by both the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- 5.4 In the present inquiry, the Committee again considered whether sanctions should be introduced for non-compliance with the Standards. A number of possible responses were canvassed, including:
- the Committee writing to the head of a non-compliant agency to inform them of the breach;<sup>1</sup>
  - requiring a non-compliant author agency to provide an explanation and costing for their breach;<sup>2</sup>

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1 Printing Industries Association of Australia, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

2 Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

- the Committee granting exemptions from the Standards, and naming in Parliament any non-compliant agency who has not been granted an exemption;<sup>3</sup> and
  - improving agencies' awareness of the Standards.<sup>4</sup>
- 5.5 The Committee is not in favour of a system involving exemptions. As outlined in Chapter 1, this system was in operation in previous Parliaments. It not only resulted in an unnecessary administrative burden for the Committee, but was also not particularly effective in ensuring compliance with the intention of the Standards.
- 5.6 The option of requiring agencies to reprint *all* reports that breach *any* aspects of the Standards was considered. It was noted that, in some cases, such as impractical paper size for reports included in the PPS, it is necessary for agencies to bear the cost of reprinting a report. Reprinting should not, however, be required for other breaches that do not affect inclusion in the PPS, as this would be an unnecessary cost burden for taxpayers and may not be environmentally sustainable.<sup>5</sup>
- 5.7 The Committee favours steps to increase agencies' awareness of the Standards. It accepts that staff turnover plays a part in print procurement officers not being as conscious of the Standards as they might otherwise be. The Committee expects increased awareness has been achieved, to some extent, through this and previous inquiries.<sup>6</sup>
- 5.8 In addition, however, agencies must be reminded of the Standards in a more systematic and direct manner. This would go some way to addressing the problem of staff turnover, and should preferably occur before planning commences for each year's annual reporting processes.<sup>7</sup> This reminder may take place either in conjunction with regular information sessions arranged by the Committee (as discussed in Chapter 3), separately by writing to agencies on a regular basis, or both.
- 5.9 The introduction of sanctions was not supported by the evidence the Committee received.<sup>8</sup> The onus for complying with the Standards will therefore remain with author agencies.
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3 Australian Sports Commission, *op.cit.*

4 Mr Sandi Logan *op.cit.*

5 Mr Richard Pye, *op.cit.*, p. 31; Department of Health and Ageing, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

6 Mr Sandi Logan, *op.cit.*

7 *ibid.*; Ms Jennifer Barbour, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

8 Australian Public Service Commission, *op.cit.*; Department of Veterans' Affairs, *op.cit.*

- 5.10 The Committee is confident that departments and agencies will ensure that they are achieving value for money, particularly because Estimates committees and this committee will continue to monitor these issues and may take up the matter with the relevant Minister.<sup>9</sup>
- 5.11 The Committee expects that breaches of the standards will decrease with the publicity of the inquiry and with the introduction of revised Standards that are more responsive to author bodies' needs.

### **Recommendation 8**

- 5.12 **The Committee recommends that government agencies, authorities and companies continue to be responsible for their own compliance with the Standards.**

## **Concluding remarks**

- 5.13 The Committee believes that the current Standards have been an effective means of ensuring that tabled documents conform to the requirements of the PPS with minimal additional cost to author bodies. However, the Committee acknowledges that developments in printing technology, the needs of a wider audience and alternative means of accessing documents have made it appropriate to re-examine the Standards with a view to allowing greater flexibility while maintaining the principles of the existing Standards.
- 5.14 The use of colour, in particular, has been a matter that has generated a great deal of interest from government bodies, particularly in light of the evolving role of their reports to Parliament.
- 5.15 The Committee is confident that the revised Standards – which will come into effect as of 1 January 2008 – allow agencies flexibility in meeting their evolving needs, while also ensuring the responsible and appropriate use of government funds.

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9 Mr Richard Pye, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

- 5.16 In developing the revised Standards, the Committee has taken care to ensure that they are practicable and responsive to agencies' needs. The Committee expects that agencies will respond positively, with an appropriate focus on issues raised in this report, such as appropriate planning, targeted training, and timely liaison with printing suppliers.

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**Recommendation 9**

- 5.17 **The Committee recommends that government agencies, authorities and companies comply fully with the revised Standards at Appendix D.**

**Mrs Trish Draper MP**

**Committee Chair**

**13 September 2007**