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British Tribunals of Inquiry: Legislative and
Judicial Control of the Inquisitorial Process—
Relevance to Australian Royal Commissions

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British Tribunals of Inquiry: Legislative and Judicial Control
of the Inquisitorial Process—Relevance to Australian Royal
Commissions

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15 April 2003

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Executive Summary

Australian Royal Commissions and British Tribunals of Inquiry have been, and continue to be, used as accepted tools of government. They can investigate and report on major disasters or events that become matters of public concern as a result for example of some alleged maladministration in the workings of government. The current Royal Commissions on the collapse of HIH¹ and also into the building industry² provide the most recent illustrations of the uses made of such inquiries at the federal level of government.

To be fully effective these kinds of public inquiries are often given coercive powers of summoning witnesses and compelling the production of documents. However, their undoubted utility has to be balanced against other considerations such as their potential to harm the reputations, and intrude on the privacy, of individuals. This gives rise to the need to adopt safeguards for witnesses who may be called upon to appear before them. A related issue concerns the effect of adopting such safeguards on the costs and duration of inquiries. A further underlying issue concerns the appropriateness of using safeguards developed in *adversarial* proceedings in the kind of *inquisitorial* proceedings that are necessarily involved in public inquiries.

The paper³ from which this brief is drawn attempts to assess the relevance of the experience generated by British Tribunals of Inquiry for Australian federal Royal Commissions especially when analysed against the background of judicial developments in some other jurisdictions such as New Zealand and Ireland. The experience of those countries may also provide insights into the law which governs the operation of Australian federal royal commissions and changes that might be considered to that law in the future.

Establishment and Composition of British Tribunals of Inquiry

Important questions arise regarding how public inquiries are established and what should be their composition.

The establishment of British Tribunals of Inquiry in 1921 in preference to parliamentary committees of inquiry was, in part, due to the inability of such committees to examine witnesses on oath. It was also due to the unhappy experiences which parliamentary inquiries had enjoyed in the past, essentially as a result of political partisanship. The former kinds of inquiries have frequently been conducted by senior judges. The appointment of members of the judiciary attracts significant advantages to the Executive branch of government since it bestows on those inquiries what has been described as the 'borrowed authority' of the judiciary. This is perceived as posing significant dangers for the independence of the judiciary and thus gives rise to serious questions of policy which in Australia are governed by constitutional and legal restraints founded on the separation of judicial powers.

The increased role of judges in the judicial review of governmental action under the recently enacted British Human Rights Act 1998 and the arrangements for the devolution of authority to the constituent parts of the United Kingdom, may require a re-examination of the advisability of appointing existing judges to Tribunals of Inquiry. One way of maximising the preservation of the authority and prestige of serving judges both in the United Kingdom and Australia is to appoint retired judges.

Scope of Inquiries and Need for Parliamentary Approval

Significant issues arise concerning the scope of the investigations undertaken by public inquiries. What matters are appropriate for such investigation? To what extent should the inquiries be carried on without the approval of parliament?

British Tribunals of Inquiry have been appointed to investigate over a wide range of incidents and matters including allegations of misconduct against Ministers of the Crown, civil servants, local authorities and police. Examples have involved improper gifts to Ministers, the improper disclosure of budget secrets and the official bank rate, accusations of brutality against police, disorders in Northern Ireland ('The Bloody Sunday Affair') and mine disasters. In recent times they have also involved the shooting of innocent children in Dunblane Primary School, the abuse of children in North Wales and the numerous deaths of patients treated by a private doctor. This gives rise to the issue of which inquiries can legally be held, and with whose approval, given the implications such inquiries have for the potential intrusion into the privacy of individuals. A full list of all British inquiries to date is attached in Schedule 1. Some statistical information regarding the length of an inquiry, the number of lawyers and witnesses involved and the volume of recorded evidence, in relation to three of these inquiries, may be found in Schedule 2. Australian

Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry under the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cwlth) are listed at Schedule 3.

The suggestion put forward in the paper is that there is considerable merit in following the British model in two particular respects. The first is that of requiring parliamentary approval for the appointment of Tribunals of Inquiry. The second is to ensure that such inquiries are only permitted to inquire into 'definite matters' of 'urgent public importance' on the assumption that the primary judgment for forming an opinion on these matters is vested in the body which appoints the tribunal. The existing legal prohibition against the unauthorised delegation of the power to define the scope of a public inquiry operates as an important brake in limiting the extent to which Tribunals of Inquiry and Royal Commissions can be authorised to define their own terms of reference.

A related issue concerns the extent to which public inquiries can investigate questions of criminal liability given the serious implications such inquiries can pose for the holding of a fair trial since the findings of such inquiries are not legally authoritative and binding. Despite those implications, the analysis undertaken in this paper suggests that Tribunals of Inquiry and Royal Commissions can probably be appointed to inquire into whether individuals have committed criminal offences in the United Kingdom and Australia. This is subject to some restrictions which flow from the law of contempt once an individual is formally charged and put on trial. Although it was different before, the position is now probably the same in New Zealand as a result of statutory changes.

Conduct

General

The stages of an inquiry conducted by a Tribunal of Inquiry have been described in the following terms and would seem to be equally applicable to inquiries conducted by Australian Royal Commissions. These consist of:

- a preliminary investigation of the evidence available
- the determination by the tribunal of what it considers to be evidence relevant to the matters into which it is obliged to inquire
- the service of such evidence on persons likely to be affected
- the public hearing of witnesses in regard to such evidence
- the cross-examination of such witnesses by or on behalf of persons affected thereby
- the preparation of a report and the making of recommendations based on the facts established at such a public hearing.

To what extent should the conduct of a public inquiry be subject to legal regulation? Tribunals of Inquiry and Royal Commissions are, for the most part, legally free to determine their own procedures subject to the need to comply with the legally enforceable rules of procedural fairness developed by the courts. The extent of statutory regulation is for the most part quite small. The rules on procedural fairness have assumed a greater importance than might have originally been envisaged because of their evolving and dynamic character. In the United Kingdom a further constraint on the autonomy enjoyed by Tribunals, which has assumed a growing importance, flows from the operation of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Salmon Principles

One of the important issues which arises from the creation of public inquiries relates to the rights of witnesses. What, if any, safeguards are needed to protect the rights of witnesses appearing before such inquiries? To what extent are the rights of parties and witnesses in ordinary legal proceedings appropriate for adoption in public inquiries vested with coercive powers to summon witnesses and require the production of documents?

The United Kingdom has seen in recent times the emergence of a debate as to how best to safeguard the rights of witnesses called to give evidence before public inquiries including Tribunals of Inquiry armed with coercive powers. The debate has been characterised by a difference between those who favour the adoption of the same kinds of safeguards enjoyed by witnesses in adversarial proceedings, as recommended in the Salmon Royal Commission Report in 1966⁴, and those who argue that such safeguards are not appropriate to inquisitorial proceedings, as argued in the Scott Report in 1996.⁵

The paper from which this brief is drawn analyses in detail the way in which both approaches diverge as regards the circumstances that justify the involvement of witnesses, giving witnesses notice of adverse matters raised against them, legal representation of witnesses, and the cross-examination, examination in chief and re-examination of witnesses. The Salmon Royal Commission recommended what were described as six cardinal principles.

- *Principle 1:* Before any person becomes involved in an inquiry, the Tribunal must be satisfied that there are circumstances which affect her/him and which the Tribunal proposes to investigate.
- *Principle 2:* Before any person who is involved in an inquiry is called as a witness, s/he should be informed in advance of allegations against her/him and the substance of the evidence in support of the allegations.
- Principle 3:
 - (a) S/he should be given an adequate opportunity of preparing her/his case and of being assisted by legal advisers.

(b) Her/his legal expenses should normally be met out of public funds.

- *Principle 4:* S/he (the witness) should have the opportunity of being examined by her/his own solicitor or counsel and of stating his case in public at the inquiry.
- *Principle 5:* Any material witnesses s/he wishes called at the inquiry should if reasonably practicable, be heard.
- *Principle 6:* S/he should have the opportunity of testing by cross-examination conducted by her/his own solicitor or counsel any evidence which may affect her/him.

The approach of the Scott Report stressed the differences between the inquisitorial function of public inquiries and the adversarial nature of litigation. In the former:

- There is no proceeding on an issue the subject of a proceeding between parties in any real or substantial sense: the inquiry directs the inquiry and the witnesses are of necessity witnesses called by or with the authority of the inquiry.
- There is no plaintiff or defendant, no prosecutor or defendant.
- There are no pleadings to define the issues to be tried, nor are there any charges, indictments, or depositions.
- An inquiry may take a fresh turn at any moment. It is therefore difficult for persons involved to know in advance of the hearing what allegations may be made against them.

Litigation, on the other hand, involves each party having a case to be placed before a court for its consideration and procedures. This is designed to ensure that the defendant knows the essential nature of the other party's case. In an inquisitorial inquiry there are only witnesses who have or may have knowledge of some matters under investigation.

In the view taken in the Scott Report, the Salmon principles failed to satisfy three principal objectives of a public inquiry. These were:

- the need to be fair and seen to be fair to those whose interests, reputations or fortunes may be adversely affected
- the need for proceedings to be conducted with efficiency and as much expedition as is practicable
- the need for the costs of the proceedings to be kept within reasonable bounds.

A recent report prepared by the British Council of Tribunals⁶ and endorsed by the then British Government seemed to significantly downplay the difference between the two approaches and appeared to avoid coming down clearly in favour of one or the other of

those approaches. The hallmark of its approach was flexibility and it believed that it was wholly impracticable to devise a single set of model rules or guidelines that will apply to every inquiry.

Although originally intended as non-legally enforceable guidelines, the extent to which the recommendations to adopt the Salmon principles will be followed in the future in the United Kingdom may now depend on the extent to which courts will recognise them as forming part of the common law rules of procedural fairness. It is true that the Salmon principles have received legislative and constitutional recognition in other countries apart from the United Kingdom.⁷ However the writer of this paper believes that, overall, the arguments in favour of leaving the extent of their recognition in the hands of the courts outweigh those that favour their adoption as a statutory code.

Other Matters

The Salmon Report dealt with certain other matters which also deserve consideration for Australia. These included the importance of an inquiry explaining at the outset how it proposed to interpret the terms of reference of the inquiry and the procedures it proposed to adopt for the conduct of the inquiry. They also involved the desirability of avoiding where possible reliance on hearsay evidence and only relying on evidence that would have been admissible in ordinary court proceedings, when reporting on the conduct of individual witnesses. In addition Australian federal legislation is, with some exceptions, silent on whether inquiries should be conducted in public. The public nature of an investigation goes to the heart of one of the advantages of holding an inquiry, namely, securing the confidence of the public in the findings of the inquiry. The view expressed in the paper is that it is desirable to enact provisions similar to those enacted with respect to British Tribunals of Inquiry that would clarify the general obligation of Australian federal Royal Commissions to conduct their inquiries in public. The same applies to legislation that would define the period during which the law of contempt operates in relation to the proceedings of such Royal Commissions. The latter law protects the authority and ability of such inquiries to perform their appointed task.

Scope of Judicial Review

Public inquiries give rise to important questions concerning judicial review. In what circumstance are, and should, the proceedings of public inquiries be open to judicial review? What grounds are, and should, be available to challenge the conduct and findings of such inquiries in legal proceedings?

The essential assumption which underpins the overall desirability of leaving the protection of witnesses to the courts is that judicial review is available for that purpose. The historical and traditional obstacle in the way of reviewing their findings has always been the fact that the findings by bodies that are only appointed to inquire and report have not been seen as

affecting the rights of individuals. It is suggested in this paper that the obstacle has now lost most of its force.

The courts in New Zealand have in recent times led the way in subjecting public inquiries to the operation of the normal principles of administrative law review. This allows challenges in the courts in relation to Royal Commissions that are based on the following grounds:

- the establishment of the Royal Commission is beyond the legal power or authority to establish the Commission
- the validity of its terms of reference
- the procedures of the Commission are contrary to law
- the procedures of the Commission do not comply with the rules of natural justice
- the Commission has made an error of law, or
- the continuation of an inquiry conducted by a Commission constitutes contempt.

Experience so far suggests that judicial review in the United Kingdom is likely, and has already begun, to follow the same course. The enactment of the British Human Rights Act has expanded the scope of judicial review by reference to wider considerations related to the protection of human rights. Such expansion of judicial review has given rise to some concern. That concern can only be underlined by the many judicial challenges launched against the procedures adopted by the second Tribunal of Inquiry appointed to investigate the 'Bloody Sunday' affair. The concerns can only be heightened by the fact that the challenges were launched despite the eminent and distinguished judges who were themselves appointed to that Tribunal; and also the lengthy period of time which elapsed before the same Tribunal was able to commence hearing witnesses.

Developments in Australia in regard to the availability of judicial review for Royal Commissions are likely to parallel, if they have not already done so, those that have taken place in New Zealand. This is complicated by the existence of possible *jurisdictional* or *procedural* drawbacks which, however, are not thought to be insuperable. Ironically, the drawbacks stem from statutory reforms that were designed to streamline the availability of judicial review and overcome the complexities that attended use of the traditional means by which courts could provide a remedy for unlawful administrative action. The federal legislation in point is the *Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977* (Cwlth). In the view advanced in this paper, the significance of the potential gaps in the jurisdiction which exist under that legislation is likely to have been reduced, if not eliminated, by the recent expansion in the jurisdiction conferred on the Federal Court as a result of insertion of sub-s. 39B(1A) in the *Judiciary Act 1903* (Cwlth). Under those provisions the Court is given the jurisdiction to deal with any matter arising under a law of the Commonwealth.

The *substantive* grounds for judicial review in Australia are likely to replicate in large measure those that exist in New Zealand. The Australian High Court has recognised that injury to reputation is now recognised as a sufficient interest to attract the operation of the rules of procedural fairness. There have been decisions of other courts in Australia that have affirmed the ability to prevent Royal Commissions from exceeding their authority by for example going beyond their terms of reference. Once it is accepted that courts can intervene on those grounds it seems difficult to see at first sight why courts should take any different view in relation to the similar availability of the other grounds of challenge under the principles of administrative law. One Australian judicial decision has, however, highlighted the difficulty of relying on some of those grounds, at least when it comes to challenging the establishment of Royal Commissions and the scope of their inquiries. The Australian courts have recognised that the application of the ordinary principles of administrative law to inquisitorial bodies cannot ignore the inquisitorial character of such bodies.

There remains in Australia the further ground of challenge in relation to federal Royal Commissions based on *constitutional* considerations. This, in theory at least, prevents Royal Commissions from inquiring into matters that lie beyond the reach of federal legislative powers. But given the wide reach of those powers, and the difficulty of showing that a matter can never have any relevance to those powers, the successful establishment of this ground is not without its difficulties.

Absence of a Right of Appeal

The final issue concerns whether there is a right to appeal against the findings of a public inquiry.

None of the jurisdictions considered in this paper make provision for a right of appeal from the findings of Tribunals of Inquiry in the United Kingdom (and Ireland) or Royal Commissions in Australia and elsewhere. This is not surprising given the non-legally binding status of such findings. It is suggested in this paper that the absence of a right of appeal, when combined with the immunity enjoyed by such public inquiries from liability in defamation, may serve as an inducement to find indirect legal means of challenging findings which damage the reputation of individuals. This was illustrated by the events that surrounded the Royal Commission⁸ into the crash of an Air New Zealand aircraft into Mount Erebus on 28 November 1979. This inquiry culminated with a landmark judicial decision which established the application of the rules of procedural fairness to Royal Commissions.

The Salmon Commission concluded against creating a right of appeal from the findings of a Tribunal of Inquiry. What emerges from the paper, however, is that both for policy and legal reasons, there will be occasions when it will be necessary to re-examine the findings of a public inquiry. The guiding objective should be to identify those occasions with the

least possible judicial intervention. That intervention should be reserved as an option of last resort given the implications for cost and delay which that option necessarily involves.

With that in mind, it is suggested in the paper that a case can be made for improving the mechanisms for reviewing the findings of public inquiries which, for one reason or another, subsequently come under question in a way that will minimise the scope of judicial intervention. One such mechanism would take the form of *suspending* judicial review until governments are given the opportunity to obtain independent advice from a retired judge or senior practising lawyer on whether a new inquiry should be established to report on the whole or any part of the issues canvassed in the earlier inquiry.

Conclusions

1. Royal commissions and tribunals of inquiry have been and continue to be used as an accepted tool of government.
2. Their undoubted utility has to be balanced against other considerations such as their potential to harm the reputations, and intrude on the privacy, of individuals; as well as considerations of cost and duration of such inquiries.
3. The existence of a unitary system of government in the United Kingdom reduces but does not eliminate the potential scope for a judicial challenge against the establishment of a tribunal of inquiry. The same scope may have increased as a result of the arrangements for the devolution of authority to Scotland and Wales which could give rise to the kind of challenges that are raised on federal grounds in Australia.
4. The enactment of the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921 (UK) was seen as providing a more satisfactory form of public inquiry than those conducted by parliamentary committees.
5. The appointment of existing judges to Tribunals of Inquiry under the 1921 Act gives rise to serious questions of constitutional policy which in Australia are governed by legal restraints founded on the separation of judicial powers. The increased role of judges in the judicial review of governmental action under the Human Rights Act 1998 (UK) and the devolution arrangements may require a re-examination of the advisability of appointing existing judges to Tribunals of Inquiry.
6. There is considerable merit in following the British example of (i) requiring parliamentary approval for the appointment of Tribunals of Inquiry with coercive powers of inquiry; and also (ii) only permitting their establishment to inquire into 'definite matters' of 'urgent public importance' on the assumption that the primary judgment for forming an opinion on these matters is vested in the body which appoints the tribunal.

7. The prohibition against unauthorised delegation operates to limit the extent to which Tribunals of Inquiry and royal commissions can be authorised to define their own terms of reference
8. It is probable that Tribunals of Inquiry and royal commissions can be appointed to inquire into whether named individuals have committed criminal offences in the United Kingdom and Australia, subject to some restrictions which flow from the law of contempt once an individual is formally charged and put on trial. The position is now probably the same in New Zealand as a result of statutory changes.
9. Tribunals of Inquiry and royal commissions are for the most part legally free to determine their own procedures subject to the need to comply with the legally enforceable rules of procedural fairness. Those rules have assumed a greater importance than might have originally been envisaged because of their evolving and dynamic character.
10. It is desirable to enact provisions similar to those enacted with respect to British Tribunals of Inquiry that would clarify the general obligation of Australian federal royal commissions to conduct their inquiries in public. The same applies to legislation that would define the period during which the law of contempt operates in relation to the proceedings of such royal commissions.
11. The United Kingdom has seen in recent times the emergence of a debate as to how best to safeguard the rights of witnesses called to give evidence before public inquiries including Tribunals of Inquiry armed with coercive powers.
12. The debate has been characterised by a difference between those who favour the adoption of the same kinds of safeguards enjoyed by witnesses in adversarial proceedings as recommended in the Salmon Royal Commission Report in 1966 and those who argue that such safeguards are not appropriate to inquisitorial proceedings as argued in the Scott Report in 1996.
13. The paper analyses in detail the way in which both approaches diverge as regards the circumstances that justify the involvement of witnesses, giving witnesses notice of adverse matters raised against them, legal representation of witnesses, and the cross-examination, examination in chief and re-examination of witnesses.
14. The recent report prepared by the Council of Tribunals and endorsed by the British Government seems to significantly downplay the difference between the two approaches and appears to avoid coming down clearly in favour of one or the other of those approaches. The hallmark of its approach was flexibility and it believed that it was wholly impracticable to devise a single set of model rules or guidelines that will apply to every inquiry.

15. Although originally intended as non-legally enforceable guidelines, the extent to which the Salmon recommendations will be followed in the future may now depend on the extent to which courts will recognise them as forming part of the common law rules of procedural fairness.
16. The Salmon recommendations have received legislative and constitutional recognition in other countries apart from the United Kingdom
17. The writer believes that overall the arguments in favour of leaving the extent of their recognition in the hands of the courts outweigh those that favour their adoption as a statutory code.
18. The essential assumption which underpins the overall desirability of leaving the protection of witnesses to the courts is that judicial review is available for that purpose.
19. The courts in New Zealand have in recent times led the way in subjecting inquisitorial bodies to the operation of the normal principles of administrative law review and judicial review in the United Kingdom is likely to follow the same course.
20. Developments in Australia in regard to the availability of judicial review for royal commissions are likely to parallel, if they have not already done so, those that have taken place in New Zealand, subject to the existence of possible procedural drawbacks which however are not thought to be insuperable.
21. In Australia there remains an additional ground of challenge in relation to federal royal commissions that is based on constitutional considerations but this ground is not without its difficulties.
22. The absence of a right of appeal against the findings of Tribunals of Inquiry and Royal Commissions may serve as an inducement to find indirect legal means of challenging findings which damage the reputation of individuals.
23. A case can be made for improving the mechanisms for reviewing the finding of inquisitorial bodies which, for one reason or another, subsequently come under question in a way that will minimise the scope of judicial intervention.
24. One such mechanism would take the form of suspending judicial review until governments are given the opportunity to obtain independent advice from a retired judge or senior practising lawyer on whether a new inquiry should be established to report the whole or any part of the issues canvassed in the earlier inquiry.

SCHEDULE 1 Inquiries held under the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921 (UK)

Title	Members of Tribunal	Year	Command Number
Destruction of documents by Ministry of Munitions officials	Lord Cave Lord Inchape Sir W. Plender	1921	1340
Royal Commission on Lunacy and Mental Disorder given powers under the Act	H. Macmillan (Chairman)	1924	2700
Arrest of R. Sheppard, R.A.O.C. Inquiry into conduct of Metropolitan Police	J. Rawlinson	1925	2497
Allegations made against the Chief Constable of Kilmarnock in connection with the dismissal of Constables Hill and Moore from the Burgh Police Force.	W. Mackenzie	1925	2659
Conditions with regard to mining and drainage in an area around the County Borough of Doncaster.	Sir H. Monro (Chairman)	1926–8	
Charges against the Chief Constable of St Helens by the Watch Committee.	C. Parry T. Walker	1928	3103
Interrogation of Miss Irene Savidge by Metropolitan Police at New Scotland Yard	Sir J.E. Banks H. Lees-Smith J. Withers	1928	3147
Allegations of bribery and corruption in connection with the letting and allocation of stances and other premises under the control of the Corporation of Glasgow.	Lord Anderson Sir R. Boothby J. Hunter	1933	4361
Unauthorised disclosure of information relating to the Budget	Sir J. Porter G. Simonds R. Oliver	1936	5184
The circumstances surrounding the loss of HM Submarine 'Thetis'	Sir J. Bucknill	1939	6190
The conduct before the Hereford Juvenile Court Justices of the proceedings against Craddock and others	Lord Goddard	1943	6485
The administration of the Newcastle upon Tyne Fire, Police and Civil Defence Services	R. Burrows	1944	6522
Bribery of Ministers of the Crown or other public servants in connection with the grant of licences, etc.	Sir J. Lynskey G. Russell Vick G. Upjohn	1948	7616
Allegations of improper disclosure of information relating to the raising of the Bank Rate	Lord Parker E. Holland G. Veale	1957	350
Allegations that John Waters was assaulted on 7 December 1957, at Thurso and the action taken by Caithness Police in connection therewith	Lord Sorn Sir J. Robertson J. Dandie	1959	718

British Tribunals of Inquiry: Legislative and Judicial Control of the Inquisitorial Process

The circumstances in which offences under the Official Secrets Act were committed by William Vassall	Lord Radcliffe Sir J. Barry Sir E. Milner-Holland	1962	2009
The disaster at Aberfan	Sir E. Davies H. Harding V. Lawrence	1967	H.C. 553
The events on Sunday, 30 January 1972 which led to loss of life in connection with the procession in Londonderry on that day ('Bloody Sunday')	Lord Widgery	1972	H.C. 220/72
The circumstances leading to the cessation of trading by the Vehicle and General Insurance Co. Ltd	Sir A. James M. Kerr S. Templeman	1972	H.C. 133
The extent to which the Crown Agents lapsed from accepted standards of commercial or professional conduct or of public administration as financiers on their own account in the years 1967/74	Sir D. Croom-Johnson Sir W. Slimmings Lord Allen	1982	H.C. 364
The shootings at Dunblane Primary School, 13 March 1996	Lord Cullen	1996	3386
Abuse of children in care in North Wales	Sir Ronald Waterhouse, M. le Fleming M. Clough	2000	
A further inquiry into The events on Sunday, 30 January 1972 which led to loss of life in connection with the procession in Londonderry on that day ('Bloody Sunday')	Lord Saville Sir E. Somers W. Hoyt J. Toohey	Still sitting (began 1998)	
Inquiry into the death of Dr Shipton's patients	Lady Janet Smith	Still sitting (began 2001)	

SCHEDULE 2 Statistical Information

	Length	Number of lawyers	Number of witnesses	Volume of recorded evidence
Aberfan disaster 1966	26.10.66 – 17.7.67 76 days	31	134	4236 pages
Vassall 1962	15.11.62 – 5.4.63 29.5 days	25	142	552 pages
Dunblane school shootings 1996	21.3.96 – 30.9.96	17	178	1600 letters/33 739 petitions
Abuse of children in care in Wales	17.6.96 – 7.5.98 (witnesses heard between 4.2.97 – 12.3.98)	52	575	43 000 pages (examination of 9500 social services files)

Note: This information was compiled by the writer from the reports of the above randomly selected inquiries and also, in the case of the last inquiry, from material supplied by the Lord Chancellors Department.

SCHEDULE 3 Australian Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry under the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cwlth)

1901–2001

Reports column: indicates the location of the report in the Parliamentary Papers Series, held at major libraries. The annotation 'tabled not printed' designates reports presented to Parliament which are *not* ordered to be printed. Whilst these are parliamentary papers, they do not form part of the Parliamentary Papers Series. Some of these items were published separately, and some have what is known as a List Number which is relevant only for Parliamentary Library staff. Some unpublished reports are held by the National Archives of Australia; in some of these cases, the location symbol NAA is used.

State column: indicates Royal Commissions which were appointed both by the Commonwealth and the States/Territories named.

Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Year / Volume / Pages)	State
Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon the arrangements made for the transport of troops returning from service in South Africa in the S.S. "Drayton Grange" ...	12 August–9 October 1902	A. McLean (Chair), D. A. Gresswell, G. McGregor, D. Thomson, W. D. Williams	1901–02/II/119–35	
Royal Commission on sites for the seat of government of the Commonwealth	14 January–17 July 1903	J. Kirkpatrick (Chair), A. W. Howitt, H. C. Stanley, G. Stewart	1903/II/211–320	
Royal Commission on the Bonuses for Manufactures Bill	15 January 1903–2 March 1904	C. C. Kingston (Chair), E. N. C. Braddon, J. Cook, S. W. Cooke, G. W. Fuller, L. E. Groom, W. M. Hughes, J. W. Kirwan, J. W. McCay, S. Mauger, D. Watkins, J. C. Watson	1904/II/1407–1620	
Royal Commission on the butter industry	11 April 1904–27 July 1905	G. C. Morison (Chair), G. Graham, H. G. Turner	1904/II/1621–31, 1905/II/1219–91	

Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Year / Volume / Pages)	State
Royal Commission on the Navigation Bill	29 June 1904–14 June 1906	W. M. Hughes (Chair), G. B. Edwards, L. E. Groom, R. S. Guthrie, W. Knox, H. de Largie, J. Macfarlane, S. Mauger, D. Thomson	1906/III/1–1036, 1907–08/IV/1–59	
Royal Commission on the affray at Goaribari Island, British New Guinea, on the 6th of March, 1904	25 July 1904–13 September 1904	C. E. R. Murray	1904/II/67–175	
Royal Commission on customs and excise tariffs	12 December 1904–9 August 1907	J. Quick (Chair), F. Clarke, J. S. Clemons, J. M. Fowler, G. W. Fuller, W. G. Higgs, G. McGregor, T. Playford, G. W. Wamsley	1905/II/223–67, 1906/IV–V (whole vols), 1907–08/IV/529–1673	
Royal Commission on old-age pensions	27 February 1905–19 June 1906	A. Chapman (Chair), F. W. Bamford, L. Bonython, C. E. Frazer, J. P. Gray, H. W. Lee, K. O'Malley, J. Page, G. F. Pearce, T. Skene, S. Smith, J. Styles	1906/III/1435–1805, 1907–08/II/1251–1253	
Royal Commission on the tobacco monopoly	30 December 1905–14 June 1906	G. F. Pearce (Chair), E. Findley, J. P. Gray, J. H. Keating, J. C. Stewart, W. H. Story, J. Styles	1906/III/1807–2234	
Royal Commission on ocean shipping service	11 January–29 June 1906	J. Thomas (Chair), J. M. Chanter, J. Gibb, C. McDonald, H. Mahon, S. Smith, W. G. Spence, D. Storrer, H. Willis	1906/III/1037–1433	
British New Guinea—Royal Commission of inquiry into the present conditions, including the method of government, of the Territory of Papua, and the best means of their improvement	27 August 1906–20 February 1907	J. A. K. MacKay (Chair), C. E. Herbert, W. E. Parry Okeden	1907/I/137–463	
Royal Commission on secret drugs, cures, and foods	11 December 1906–8 August 1907	O. C. Beale	1907–08/IV/61–527	

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Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Year / Volume / Pages)	State
Royal Commission on postal services	22 June 1908–5 October 1910	J. H. Cook (Chair), H. de Largie, E. Mulcahy, C. C. Salmon, D. Storrer, W. Webster, W. H. Wilks	1910/IV–V (whole vols)	
Royal Commission on insurance	15 December 1908–1 July 1910	J. H. Hood (Chair), G. H. Knibbs	1909/II/1393–94, 1910/II/1043–1346	
Royal Commission on stripper harvesters and drills	15 December 1908–30 July 1909	A. Poynton (Chair), J. M. Chanter, G. W. Fuller, J. K. McDougall, S. Sampson	1909/II/1477–1874	
Royal Commission on Tasmanian customs leakage	30 December 1910–3 October 1911	J. A. Jensen (Chair), F. W. Bamford, J. Forrest, W. J. Lyne, W. J. McWilliams, E. A. Roberts, A. Wynne, W. N. Hedges, S. Sampson	1911/III/853–1238	
Royal Commission on the sugar industry	24 October 1911–4 December 1912	J. H. Gordon (Chair 1911–12), W. J. Brown (Chair 1912), R. M. M. Anderson, T. W. Crawford, A. Hinchcliffe, M. R. Shannon	1912/III/1035–1125, 1913/IV/1169–2316	
Royal Commission on the pearl-shelling industry	3 April 1912–30 August 1916	F. W. Bamford (Chair), T. Givens, W. E. Johnson, W. J. McWilliams, H. Mahon, W. Maloney	1913/III/577–803, 1914–17/V/831–41	
Royal Commission on the fruit industry	12 April 1912–8 October 1914	F. J. Foster (Chair), W. F. Finlayson, D. J. Gordon, P. J. Lynch, R. K. Ready, S. Sampson, J. Thomson	1913/IV/1–1167, 1914/II/223–45, 1914–17/V/193–211	
Royal Commission appointed to inquire into certain charges against Mr. Henry Chinn	4 January–27 November 1913	H. Hodges	1913/III/1245–1252	
Royal Commission on Northern Territory railways and ports	28 March 1913–24 June 1914	F. Clarke (Chair), D. Lindsay, A. Combes.	1914/II/677–731	
Royal Commission on powellised timber	19 December 1913–8 October 1914	H. Gregory (Chair), J. Bennett, R. J. Burchell, W. J. McWilliams, K. O'Malley, A. Poynton, H. Sinclair	1914/II/655–56, 1914–17/V/843–90	

Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Year / Volume / Pages)	State
Royal Commission upon the Commonwealth electoral law and administration	20 January 1914–14 July 1915	H. Sinclair (Chair), R. W. Foster, W. Maloney, W. H. Laird Smith, R. Patten	1914/II/211–12, 1914–15/II/435–54	
Royal Commission on meat export trade	5 June–2 December 1914	P. W. Street	1914–17/V/563–609	
Royal Commission on food supplies and trade and industry during the war	31 August–16 December 1914	A. Deakin (Chair), G. H. Knibbs, D. Thomson	1914–17/V/143–86	
Royal Commission on mail services and trade development between Australia and the New Hebrides	31 March–28 July 1915	F. W. Bamford (Chair), W. E. Johnson	1914–17/V/665–724	
Royal Commission on Liverpool Military Camp, New South Wales	12 July–20 August 1915	G. E. Rich	1914–17/II/273–97	
Royal Commission on the charges made by D. L. Gilchrist concerning the construction of the western section of the Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta Railway	23 March–13 September 1916	J. G. Eagleson	1914–17/IV/1341–1400	
Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon certain charges against the Administrator and other officers of the Northern Territory Administration	11 May–13 September 1916	A. N. Barnett	1914–17/I/484 (reference only, tabled not printed)	
Royal Commission on Federal Capital Administration	14 June 1916–14 June 1917	W. Blackett	1914–17/II/1067–1112, 1917/II/1–78	
Royal Commission on Java and the East Indies, Singapore and the Straits Settlements	7 February 1917–10 May 1918	J. J. Long	1917–19/V/1063–97	
Royal Commission on Navy and Defence Administration	2 July 1917–4 July 1919	W. G. McBeath (Chair), J. Chalmers, P. T. Taylor, F. A. Verco	1917–19/IV/175–463	
Royal Commission on the war—Australian Imperial Force. Report ... as to number of members fit for active service and number of reinforcements and enlistments required	6 March–4 April 1918	S. W. Griffith	1917–19/IV/647–50	
Royal Commission on Public Service administration, Commonwealth of Australia	2 October 1918–28 July 1920	D. C. McLachlan	1920–21/IV/1525–1620	
Royal Commission ... upon the public expenditure of the Commonwealth of Australia with a view to effecting economies	21 November 1918–6 April 1921	R. Gibson (Chair), G. G. Haldane, G. H. Turton	1917–19/V/1525–1615, 1920–21/IV/1297–1517	

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Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Year / Volume / Pages)	State
Royal Commission on taxation of leasehold estates in Crown lands	18 December 1918–9 October 1919	G. H. Knibbs (Chair), H. O. Allan, H. A. G. Curry	1917–19/VI/1027–72	
Royal Commission on the sugar industry	31 March 1919–18 March 1920	A. B. Piddington (Chair), N. C. Lockyer, S. Mills	1920–21/IV/905–60	
Royal Commission on industrial troubles on Melbourne wharfs	7 June 1919–6 May 1920	G. J. Dethridge	1920–21/IV/687–92	
Royal Commission on late German New Guinea	12 August 1919–21 May 1920	J. H. P. Murray (Chair), A. A. Hunt, W. H. Lucas	1920–21/III/1539–1621	
Royal Commission to inquire into complaints by the munition worker passengers to Australia by the transport "Bahia Castillo"	15 October 1919–24 December 1919 [date report completed]	P. Cohen (Chair), C. R. W. Brewis, H. W. Lloyd	NAA A11803, control symbol 1919/89/670	
Royal Commission on Northern Territory Administration	12 November 1919–21 May 1920	N. V. Ewing	1920–21/III/1653–69	
Royal Commission on the basic wage	6 December 1919–23 November 1920	A. B. Piddington (Chair), R. Cheney, H. C. Gibson, W. D. Gilfillan, E. E. Keep, T. C. Maher, A. C. Morley, G. M. Allard, J. A. Harper	1920–21/IV/529–645	
Royal Commission on taxation	10 September 1920–13 June 1923	W. W. Kerr (Chair), M. B. Duffy, J. G. Fairleigh, J. J. Garvan, J. Jolly, S. Mills, W. T. Missingham, J. Thomson	1920–21/III/1151–1243, 1922/II/1023–1177, 1923–24/III/2193–2304	QLD, TAS, WA
Royal Commission on the increase of the selling price of coal	30 September 1920–20 October 1920 [date report completed]	C. Hibble (Chair), A. Jobson, H. H. Ling	NAA A460, control symbol A5/42	
Royal Commission on the matter of uniform railway gauge	8 February–12 October 1921	J. J. Garvan (Chair), R. Blake, F. M. Whyte	1920–21/V/757–98	
Royal Commission on pillaging of ships' cargoes	12 February–12 July 1921	W. M. MacFarlane	1920–21/IV/797–826	
Royal Commission on Cockatoo Island Dockyard	25 April–14 July 1921	M. Reid (Chair), W. J. McWilliams, W. G. Mahoney, W. M. Marks, C. W. C. Marr, T. J. Ryan, R. V. Wilson	1920–21/IV/1–16	

Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Year / Volume / Pages)	State
Royal Commission upon the loyalty to the British Crown of German Nationals resident in Australia whose property is liable to a charge created by the Treaty of Peace Regulations made under the Treaty of Peace (Germany) Act 1919–1920	7 July 1921–11 November 1921 [date report completed]	W. M. MacFarlane	NAA A6006, control symbol 1921/12/31	
Royal Commission on the circumstances attending the supposed loss at sea of the steamship "Sumatra"	25 July–3 August 1923	J. J. Cohen (Chair), H. Chudleigh, J. Vine-Hall	1923–24/I/113 [reference only; tabled not printed]	
Royal Commission in connection with sugar purchases by the Commonwealth through Mr. W. E. Davies in September and October, 1920	24 August 1923–27 March 1924	E. F. Mitchell	1923–24/II/1647–57	
Royal Commission in connection with joinery supplied to the War Service Homes Commissioner in March, 1920	7 September 1923–27 March 1924	H. H. Henchman	1923–24/IV/353–59	
Royal Commission on the Navigation Act	7 September 1923–13 August 1925	J. H. Prowse (Chair), F. Anstey, W. L. Duncan, H. E. Elliott, C. S. McHugh, A. C. Seabrook, G. E. Yates, H. J. M. Payne	1923–24/II/1019–1120, 1925/I/129 (reference only), 1925/II/1323–43	
Royal Commission on national insurance	7 September 1923–5 October 1927	J. D. Millen (Chair), B. Benny, J. Francis, J. Grant, A. E. Green, R. F. H. Green, J. F. Guthrie, J. A. H. Hunter, A. McDougall, W. G. Mahony	1925/II/1269–1321, 1926–28/IV/1411–86	
Royal Commission on the method for determining the unimproved value of land held under Crown leases	12 July 1924–10 June 1925	W. W. Kerr (Chair), M. B. Duffy, J. Jolly	1925/II/973–1033	
Royal Commission on the assessment of war service disabilities	27 August 1924–10 June 1925	C. B. Blackburn (Chair), A. V. M. Anderson, W. W. Giblin, E. S. Jackson, H. S. Newland	1925/II/67–72	
Royal Commission to inquire into extracts from the reports in Parliamentary Debates of speeches made by Mr. Scullin in the House of Representatives on 7 th and 19 th August, 1924, in relation to land tax matters	9 September 1924–10 June 1925	D. S. Edwards	1925/II/1035–61	

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Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Year / Volume / Pages)	State
Royal Commission on the finances of Western Australia, as affected by Federation	5 November 1924–23 September 1925	W. G. Higgs (Chair), J. Entwistle, S. Mills	1925/II/1463–1641	
Royal Commission on health	7 January 1925–14 January 1926	G. A. Syme (Chair), J. S. Greig, F. S. Hone, S. R. Innes-Noad, R. H. Todd	1926–28/IV/1247–1370	
Royal Commission on Norfolk Island affairs	20 January–13 August 1926	F. Whysall	1926–28/IV/1487–1563	
Royal Commission on certain matters in connexion with the British Phosphate Commission	13 June–11 August 1926	A. Robinson	1926–28/IV/1067–84	
Royal Commission on wireless	28 January–5 October 1927	J. H. Hammond (Chair), C. E. Crocker, J. A. M. Elder, A. J. B. McMaster	1926–28/IV/1565–1603	
Royal Commission on the Edie Creek (New Guinea) leases	2 March–5 October 1927	P. B. MacGregor	1926–28/IV/1213–34	
Royal Commission on the moving picture industry in Australia	28 May 1927–26 April 1928	W. M. Marks (Chair), W. L. Duncan, F. M. Forde, J. Grant, H. Gregory, H. Hays, L. W. Nott	1926–28/IV/1371–1409	
Royal Commission on the Constitution	18 August 1927–21 November 1929	J. B. Peden (Chair), P. P. Abbott, T. R. Ashworth, E. K. Bowden, H. P. Colebatch, M. B. Duffy, D. L. McNamara	1929–31/II/897–1296	
Royal Commission on child endowment or family allowances	28 September 1927–18 March 1929	T. S. O'Halloran (Chair), J. Curtin, I. Evans, S. Mills, F. M. Muscio	1929/II/1281–1405	
Royal Commission of inquiry into fatalities at Bundaberg	1 February–13 June 1928	C. H. Kellaway (Chair), P. MacCallum, A. H. Tebbutt	1926–28/IV/1085–1211	
Royal Commission appointed to inquire into statements in the press in regard to offers alleged to have been made to members to resign seats in the Federal Parliament	28 May–4 September 1928	E. Scholes	1926–28/IV/1235–45	
Royal Commission on the finances of South Australia, as affected by Federation	28 July 1928–22 August 1929	J. Cook (Chair), A. E. Barton, H. R. Brookes	1929/II/2201–48	

Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Year / Volume / Pages)	State
Royal Commission on the coal industry	3 June–21 November 1929	C. G. W. Davidson (Chair), H. W. Gepp, L. K. Ward	1929–31/II/881–88	
Royal Commission appointed to inquire into allegations affecting members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee of Public Accounts in connexion with claims made by broadcasting companies against the Commonwealth Government	15 May–8 August 1930	G. J. Dethridge	1929–31/III/629–38	
Royal Commission on Jacob Johnson	29 August 1931–1 October 1931 [date report completed]	G. S. Beeby	NAA A432, control symbol 1929/170 Part 8 Attachment 2	
Royal Commission on performing rights	19 September 1932–24 May 1933	L. Owen	1932–34/IV/1163–1220	
Royal Commission on taxation	6 October 1932–28 November 1934	D. G. Ferguson (Chair), E. V. Nixon	1932–34/IV/2249–96, 1934–37/III/1917–2118	
Royal Commission on mineral oils and petrol and other products of mineral oils	6 April 1933–8 April 1935	S. E. Lamb (Chair), J. Gunn, A. J. Hancock	1934–37/III/457–820	
Royal Commission on the wheat, flour and bread industries	25 January 1934–1 April 1936	H. W. Gepp (Chair), T. S. Cheadle, C. W. Harper, E. P. M. Sheedy, S. M. Wadham	1932–34/IV/2425–67, 1934–37/IV/1–690	
Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon the circumstances associated with the retirement of Lieutenant-Commander Alan Dermot Casey from the Royal Australian Navy	11 July–23 October 1934	J. M. Napier	1934–37/III/89–103	
Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the monetary and banking systems at present in operation in Australia ...	15 November 1935–24 August 1937	J. M. Napier (Chair), J. P. Abbott, J. B. Chifley, R. C. Mills, E. V. Nixon, H. A. Pitt	1934–37/V/1557–1964	
Royal Commission on doctors' remuneration for national insurance service and other contract practice	18 July 1938–	G. J. Dethridge (Chair), G. M. Allard, R. D. Mulvey	Commission lapsed, no report issued; NAA AA1969/10, control symbols 2A–2D	
Royal Commission regarding the contract for the erection of additions to the General Post Office, Sydney	7 June–7 September 1939	A. V. Maxwell	1937–40/IV/1025–51	

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Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Year / Volume / Pages)	State
Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the contract or contracts with Abbco Bread Co. Pty. Limited for the supply of bread to the Department of the Army, and other matters	28 March–21 August 1941	A. V. Maxwell	1940–43/III/9–44	
Royal Commission to inquire into circumstances under which certain public monies were used and to whom, and for what purposes such moneys were paid ...	27 September–25 November 1941	P. H. Rogers	1940–43/III/241 [reference only; tabled not printed]	
Royal Commission in the matter of an inquiry into a statement that there was a document missing from the official files in relation to "The Brisbane Line"	29 June–28 September 1943	C. J. Lowe	1943–44/I/13 [reference only; tabled not printed]	
Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon certain transactions of the Sydney Land Sales Control Office, and the Canberra Land Sales Control Office of the Treasury	13 June–25 September 1947	R. C. Kirby	1946–48/I/263 [reference only; tabled not printed]	
Royal Commission appointed to inquire into certain transactions in relation to timber rights in the Territory of Papua-New Guinea	11 January–24 June 1949	G. C. Ligertwood	1948– 49/IV/1155–93	
Royal Commission on the Port Augusta to Alice Springs Railway	June 1951–9 July 1952	A. A. Wolff (Chair), R. J. Fitch, J. A. Fargher	NAA AA1972/341, control symbol 72	
Royal Commission on television	11 February 1953–29 September 1954	G. W. Paton (Chair), C. B. Bednall, M. Foxton, R. G. Osborne, R. C. Wilson, N. S. Young	1954–55/III/679– 809	
Royal Commission on espionage	3 May 1954–14 September 1955	W. F. L. Owen	1954–55/III/187– 677	
Royal Commission on alleged improper practices and improper refusal to co-operate with the Victoria Police Force on the part of persons employed in the Postmaster-General's Department in Victoria in relation to illegal gambling	23 May 1962–23 May 1963	R. L. Taylor	1962–63/V/397- 554	
Royal Commission on loss of H.M.A.S. Voyager	14 February–26 August 1964	J. A. Spicer	1964–65– 66/XIII/289–341	
Royal Commission on the statement of Lieutenant Commander Cabban and matters incidental thereto	31 May 1967-13 March 1968	S. C. Burbury (Chair), K. W. Asprey, G. A. G. Lucas	1968/1/967–1245	

Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissoners	Report (Year / Volume / Place Number)	State
Royal Commissions into exploratory and production drilling for petroleum in the area of the Great Barrier Reef	5 May 1970–11 February 1975	G. Wallace, V. J. Moroney, J. E. Smith	1975/13/2–3	QLD
Aboriginal Land Rights Commission	8 February 1973–17 July 1974	A. E. Woodward	1973/1/1, 1974/1/1	
Australian Post Office Commission of inquiry	22 February 1973–23 July 1974	J. Vernon (Chair), B. J. Callinan, J. J. Kennedy	1974/2/1–2	
Commission of inquiry into land tenures	4 May 1973–26 May 1976	R. Else-Mitchell, R. L. Mathews, G. J. Dusseldorp	1974/8/10, 1976/12/1	
Royal Commission on petroleum	12 September 1973–8 December 1976	W. H. Collins	1974/14/2, 1975/13/4, 1975/13/1, 1976/16/3–5	
Commission of Inquiry into the maritime industry	25 September 1973–2 November 1976	M. M. Summers	1974/17/15–16, 1976/23/1–5	
Independent Inquiry into Frequency Modulation Broadcasting	27 November 1973–13 March 1974	F. McLean, C. C. Renwick	1974/2/6	
Commission of Inquiry into transport to and from Tasmania	10 April 1974–25 March 1976	J. F. Nimmo	1976/24/5	
Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration	6 June 1974–18 August 1976	H. C. Coombs (Chair), P. H. Bailey, E. Campbell, J. E. Isaac, P. R. Munro	1976/19/1–5	
Royal Commission on human relationships	21 August 1974–28 February 1978	E. Evatt (Chair), F. R. Arnott, A. B. Deveson	1976/8/9, 104–108/1978	
Royal Commission on intelligence and security	21 August 1974–25 October 1977	R. M. Hope	92/1977, 246–249/1977	
Royal Commission into alleged payments to maritime unions	5 September 1974–25 May 1976	J. B. Sweeney	List number 340/1975 (tabled not printed); 1976/24/4	
Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon certain incidents in which Aborigines were involved in the Laverton area [WA Royal Commission with a Commonwealth nominee and costs shared by Commonwealth and WA Governments]	23 April 1975–13 April 1976	G. D. Clarkson (Chair), E. F. Bridge, E. F. Johnston	WA Parl Papers 1976, Vol 8.	WA
Royal Commission on Norfolk Island	15 May 1975–16 November 1976	J. A. Nimmo	1976/21/4	

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Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Paper No. / Year)	State
Australian Royal Commission of inquiry into drugs	13 October 1977–16 September 1980	E. S. Williams	275/1979, 25–29/1980, 226/1980	VIC, QLD, WA, TAS
Royal Commission of inquiry into matters in relation to electoral redistribution Queensland, 1977	24 April 1978–15 August 1978	D. G. McGregor	263/1978	
Commission of inquiry into the efficiency and administration of hospitals	29 August 1979–26 February 1981	J. H. Jamison (Chair), C. W. L. de Boos, H. R. H. Holmes à Court, J. S. Yeatman	181/1980, 20–22/1981	TAS, QLD, WA
Commission of inquiry into the viability of the Christmas Island phosphate industry	20 December 1979–21 February 1980	W. W. Sweetland	36/1980	
Royal Commission on the activities of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union	10 September 1980–1 November 1984	F. X. Costigan	72/1982, 185/1982, 223/1983, 284–289/1984	VIC
Royal Commission of inquiry into drug trafficking	25 June 1981–31 May 1983	D. G. Stewart	119/1982, 41/1983, 186/1983 [NZ Report]	NSW, VIC, QLD, NZ
Royal Commission into the activities of the Australian Building Construction Employees' and Builders Labourers' Federation	20 August 1981–20 October 1982	J. S. Winneke	296/1982	VIC
Royal Commission into Australian meat industry	12 September 1981–21 September 1982	A. E. Woodward	222/1982	VIC
Royal Commission of inquiry into the activities of the Nugan Hand Group [extension of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drug Trafficking 1981–1983]	28 March 1983–27 November 1985	D. G. Stewart	275/1983, 65/1985, 368–369/1985	NSW
Royal Commission on the use and effects of chemical agents on Australian personnel in Vietnam	13 May 1983–22 August 1985	P. G. Evatt	288–296/1985	
Royal Commission on Australia's security and intelligence agencies	17 May 1983–22 May 1985	R. M. Hope	323/1983, 1/1984, 230–232/1985	
Commission of inquiry into compensation arising from social security conspiracy prosecutions	9 February 1984–10 June 1986	R. Mitchell	174/1986	
Royal Commission into British nuclear tests in Australia	16 July 1984–5 December 1985	J. R. McLelland (Chair), J. Fitch, W. J. Jonas	482–484/1985	
Royal Commission of inquiry into alleged telephone interceptions	29 March 1985–1 May 1986	D. G. Stewart	155/1986	NSW & VIC
Royal Commission of inquiry into Chamberlain convictions.	2 April 1986–2 June 1987	T. R. Morling	192/1987	NT

Title	Date of Letters Patent–Date Final Report Presented	Commissioners	Report (Paper No. / Year)	State
Royal Commission into grain storage, handling and transport	13 October 1986–15 March 1988	J. C. McColl	40–42/1988	NSW, VIC, QLD, WA, SA
Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody	16 October 1987–9 May 1991	J. H. Muirhead (Chair 1987–89), E. F. Johnston (Chair 1989–91), J. H. Wootten, L. F. Wyvill, D. J. O'Dea, P. Dodson	20–24, 101–102, 126, 129, 142, 209, 265, 409–410/1989; 48–49, 55–57, 151–158, 195–199, 217–228, 292–300, 386–387, 404/1990; 1–3, 24–29, 63–88, 119–136/1991	NSW, VIC, QLD, WA, SA, TAS, NT
Commission of inquiry into the Australian Secret Intelligence Service	15 March 1994–9 May 1995	G. J. Samuels, M. H. Codd	List number 281/1995 (tabled not printed)	
Royal Commission of inquiry into the leasing by the Commonwealth of accommodation in Centenary House	16 May 1994–7 November 1994	T. R. Morling	344/1994	
Commission of Inquiry into the relations between the CAA and Seaview Air	25 October 1994–9 October 1996	L. Street (1994–95), J. H. Staunton (1994–96)	List numbers 354–355/1996 (tabled not printed)	
HIH Royal Commission	29 August 2001–4 April 2003 [deadline for final report]	N. J. Owen	Publication of final report awaited	
Royal Commission into the building and construction industry	29 August 2001–24 February 2003	T. R. H. Cole	List number 559/2002 (tabled not printed); final report tabled 26 and 27 March 2003	

Note: Prepared by the Department of the Parliamentary Library.

Endnotes

1. HHH Royal Commission, 29 August 2001–4 April 2003 [deadline for final report], Commissioner N. J. Owen.
2. Royal Commission into the building and construction industry, 29 August 2001–24 February 2003 [deadline for final report], Commissioner T. R. H. Cole.
3. Published in full by Federation Press: Professor Geoffrey Lindell, 'Tribunals of Enquiry and Royal Commissions', *Law and Policy Paper* no. 22, 2002, Centre for International & Public Law/Federation Press, Sydney, 2003, ISBN 1 86287 456 5/PB.
For details see <http://www.fedpress.aust.com>, phone (02) 9552 2200.
4. *Royal Commission on Tribunals of Inquiry, 1966, report of the Commission under the chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Salmon*, H.M.S.O., London, 1966.
5. *Report of the Inquiry into the Export of Defence Equipment and Dual Use Goods to Iraq and Related Prosecutions: return to an address of the Honourable House of Commons dated 15th February 1996*, Sir Richard Scott, in 6 vol., H.M.S.O., London, 1996.
6. Council on Tribunals: Advice to the Lord Chancellor on the procedural issues arising in the conduct of public inquiries set up by Ministers (July 1996).
7. For full details see Federation Press publication, *op. cit.* at 3.
8. *Report of the Royal Commission into the crash on Mount Erebus, Antarctica, of a DC10 aircraft operated by Air New Zealand Limited*, Commissioner Hon. P. T. Mahon, Govt Printer, Wellington, 1981.