



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA

19 AUG 2003

Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz
Special Minister of State
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister *Eric,*

Thank you for your letter of 18 August 2003 about the arrangements currently in force relating to approval of the content of newsletters printed by Senators using their entitlement.

I note that the funding arrangements did change at the beginning of last year when the printing entitlement of Senators (and Members) were prescribed in the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations 1997 and, as a consequence of this being prescribed by law, the funding for the entitlement is now under an administered special appropriation, managed by the Department of the Senate.

I note that you are responsible for the administration of the *Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990* and I would be happy for officers of the Senate and the Department of Finance and Administration to meet to discuss the existing arrangements and to prepare, for our joint consideration, a draft understanding on the administration of the prescribed printing entitlement for Senators.

The senior officer in charge of printing in the Senate is the Usher of the Black Rod, Ms Andrea Griffiths, and I will send her a copy of this letter for her information. Black Rod or her nominee will represent the Senate in any discussions with your officers, and I suggest your Department make contact with her direct.

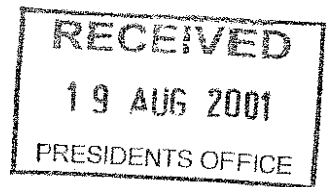
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul".

(Paul Calvert)



SENATOR THE HON ERIC ABETZ
Special Minister of State
Liberal Senator for Tasmania



Senator the Hon Paul Calvert
President of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

18 AUG 2003

Dear President *Paul,*

I am writing to explore with you the appropriateness of the arrangements, that are currently in force, requiring Senators to obtain the approval of Department of the Senate officials in respect of the content of the newsletters they have printed.

The vetting arrangements applied to Senators has been the cause of complaint over a considerable period of time. I understand that in the past the cost of Senators' printing was met from the annual appropriation for the running operation of the Parliament. This arrangement was seen as placing particular responsibilities and powers with officials of the Department of the Senate.

I understand that the funding arrangements were significantly changed when, with effect from 1 January 2002, the printing entitlements of Senators were prescribed in the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations 1997. The *Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990* contains a standing appropriation (section 11) in respect of benefits provided under the Act and Regulations. However, since 1 January 2002, I understand, the printing entitlements of Senators have been provided under the *Parliamentary Entitlements Act*, rather than from the annual operational budget of the Parliament.

As you may well be aware, responsibility for administering the *Parliamentary Entitlements Act* has been placed with me. You will therefore appreciate that I have a particular concern about the administration of all the benefits provided under the Act and the associated Regulations.

In light of the above you may see value in officers of our two departments meeting to develop, for our joint consideration, a draft understanding on the administration of Senators' printing entitlements.

Yours sincerely

ERIC ABETZ



SENATOR THE HON ERIC ABETZ
Special Minister of State
Liberal Senator for Tasmania

11 JAN 2002

Senator the Hon Margaret Reid
President of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Madam President, *Nayzel,*

On 9 September 2001 I wrote to you inviting your consideration of a relocation to the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Group in the Department of Finance and Administration of the newsletter and personalised printing entitlement of Senators. My letter followed a recommendation made by the Auditor-General concerning the administration of the entitlement for Members and I wrote to the Speaker at the same time as I wrote to you.

As you know the Prime Minister announced on 27 September 2001 that the Government had decided that a financial limit would be placed on the expenditure on newsletters and personalised stationery by each Member. The Prime Minister also announced at the same time that the printing entitlement of Senators would remain the same.

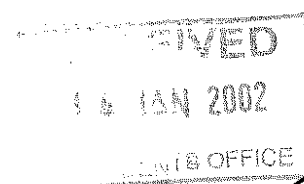
Regulations to give effect to the Prime Minister's announcement were made by the Governor-General in Council on 20 December 2001.

The Speaker has now replied to my earlier letter advising that his consideration of the issue was delayed by the election and suggesting we meet early in February.

My particular purpose in writing to you now is to again invite your comments, including whether you would see value in meeting with the Speaker and me next month.

Yours sincerely

ERIC ABETZ





SENATOR THE HON ERIC ABETZ
Special Minister of State
Liberal Senator for Tasmania

- 7 SEP 2001

Senator the Hon. Margaret Reid
President of the Senate
SG 40, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Madam President *Abetz,*

As you know the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations provide that Senators and Members be provided with personalised letterhead stationery, newsletters and other printed material as approved for distribution to constituents.

Under the arrangements which have operated each Chamber Department provides a basic printing entitlement to Senators and Members, as appropriate. There has been scope for a Member who fully utilised the allocation made by the Department of the House of Representatives to continue to access the entitlement by drawing on funds administered by the Department of Finance and Administration.

I understand that you, and your immediate predecessor, have in the past raised the desirability of extending similar arrangements to Senators to those which apply for Members.

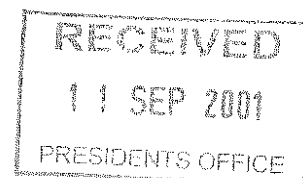
The Auditor-General in his recent report on *Parliamentarians' Entitlements: 1999-2000* pointed to the overlap in responsibility for administering the printing entitlements of Members between the Department of Finance and Administration and the Department of the House of Representatives. I have written to the Speaker in this connection suggesting that the sensible course would be to locate the administrative responsibility with the Department of Finance and Administration.

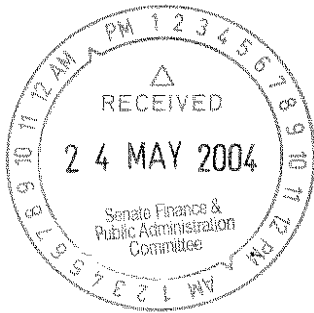
My purpose in now writing to you is to suggest that you may see advantages in relocating the administration of the printing entitlement for Senators to the Department of Finance and Administration so that Senators and Members may be provided with the same arrangements. I have in mind that the centralisation of the function in a single department would ensure consistency of treatment and achieve administrative efficiencies.

I look forward to your early response.

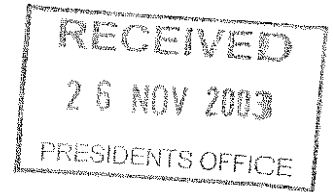
Yours sincerely

ERIC ABETZ





SENATOR THE HONERIC ABETZ
Special Minister of State
Liberal Senator for Tasmania



Senator the Hon Paul Calvert
President of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

25 NOV 2003

Dear President *Paul,*

I refer to your letters of 18 and 19 August 2003 concerning the administration of the printing entitlement provided to Senators under the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations 1997. My particular concern was the complaints by Senators about the arrangements and the responsibilities placed with me for administering the *Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990* and associated Regulations.

I note that on 28 October 2003 you issued revised, more flexible guidelines which recognised the implications of the change in the source of funding.

My reason for writing to you at this stage is to express my appreciation for the cooperation shown by you and your Department. With the successful resolution of the matter I doubt that much would be served by proceeding to a formal memorandum of understanding.

Yours sincerely

ERIC ABETZ

*Noted
[Signature] 11/12/03*