

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
OFFICE OF THE PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

Question No. 162

Senator Stott-Despoja asked the following question at the hearing on 31 October 2005:

Did the Privacy Commissioner make any attempt to resist the Government's directive to Commonwealth Departments and executive agencies to adopt a uniform branding using the Commonwealth coat of arms and relevant Australian Government agency name? Can the Commissioner explain why her office has adopted this branding when other independent statutory offices including the Ombudsman, the Human Rights Commission, the Statistician and the Electoral Commissioner declined to do so, presumably to demonstrate and maintain their independence?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner was advised by letter dated 18 July 2003 of the Government's decision that all Australian Government departments, agencies and organisations were to move to standard branding. That correspondence also advised that any requests for exemption to the use of the branding would be settled by the Prime Minister. The former Privacy Commissioner wrote seeking an exemption. The Office was advised by way of letter that no exemption would be granted. Consequently, the Office changed its branding in line with the Government's policy.