

# PUBLISHERS' LIAISON

**Anne Gardner**

National Publishers' Liaison Coordinator

Minter Ellison

Phone (08) 9429 7537 Fax (08) 9429 7666

Email: panneg@minters.com.au

---

## ***AGPS no more***

As you may all be aware, the printing and publication management functions of the Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS) have ceased. The remainder of the organisation has been restructured under the Department of Finance and Administration and is now called AusInfo

AusInfo's role will be to:

- provide advice on publishing style;
- administer Commonwealth copyright;
- administer the Library Deposit Scheme;
- administer the Parliamentary Papers series; and
- maintain the Index of Commonwealth Publications

In addition, AusInfo has in place a national information dissemination network which includes Government InfoShops, a TeleInfo operation, a subscription service and an Internet site to provide on-line access to published information<sup>1</sup>

---

## ***Federal Register of Legislative Instruments - Submission from the Australian Law Librarians' Group<sup>2</sup>***

### ***The Facts***

The Legislative Instruments Bill currently before Parliament provides for an electronic register of legislative instruments. The register, accessible via the Internet, will include the current Statutory Rules series and will replace the series as the official record of those legislative instruments

In 1996 AGPS stated that it would be impossible to publish Statutory Rules separately and that it proposed publishing a hard copy of the new legislative instruments series which would include the current Statutory Rules series. AGPS estimated that the new series would contain twice as many items as the Statutory Rules series with a consequent increase in the cost of a subscription. To defray the cost AGPS suggested a subject approach to subscriptions. The ALLG was asked to comment on this approach.

The Bill requires all instruments supplied to the Register to be on A4 paper. AGPS circulated a questionnaire in 1996 asking current subscribers to the Statutory Rules series whether they would like to purchase the new series in A4. There was no offer to publish a pamphlet series in B5 (the traditional size of Commonwealth legislation) although subscribers were asked if they would purchase bound volumes in B5. There was a later offer to publish in B5 if there were sufficient subscribers but there has been no effort to ascertain if there is sufficient interest.

Following cessation of the publishing management functions of AGPS the remainder of the organisation was restructured into AusInfo. AusInfo remains responsible for providing access to government information. At the May meeting of the AusInfo-ACLIS Liaison Committee a representative from AusInfo asked the library community for comments on whether a hard copy of FRLI was required.

Each state division of the ALLG was provided with the above information and asked to comment on any issues which may affect law libraries and their users. Issues identified are grouped under headings below. These are the need for hard copy in B5 format, continuation of the Statutory Rules series, the need for regular comprehensive indexes in hard copy, the inadequacy of subject based subscriptions and the need for published consolidations.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ausinfo.gov.au>

<sup>2</sup> Our thanks go to Joanne Pentony who is the ALLG Representative on the AusInfo-ACLIS Liaison Committee for coordinating ALLG feedback and preparing the attached submission on behalf of the ALLG.

## *The Issues*

### **Hard Copy**

The users of law libraries require immediate and convenient access to the law as it stands today and as it was at a given time. Current subscriptions to the Statutory Rules series and the gazettes provide both up-to-date and archival information. Law libraries want to be able to continue to provide that service to users. Legislation is fundamental to a law library and hard copy is heavily used on a daily basis, even when access to the Internet is available. Court libraries and practitioners appearing in court will not be able to use the Internet for court purposes because official versions still have to be purchased from AusInfo. Heavy use in larger libraries cannot be accommodated by an Internet terminal. Back-up hard copies will be needed. Internet access may meet the needs of the one-off user but it is not sufficient for those who use legislation daily and/or require it for court. These users will be disadvantaged if AusInfo does not publish in hard copy.

### **Statutory Rules Series**

Most law librarians welcome easier Internet access to instruments other than Statutory Rules. The latter will, however, continue to be the most used of the instruments in law libraries. Other instruments are only used occasionally. Libraries have not been given a reason why Ausinfo cannot publish a Statutory Rules series. Although the overarching name for all subordinate legislation will be 'legislative instruments', there will still be a distinction between rules, regulations and orders, determinations, etc. There seems to be no good reason why the rules and regulations could not continue to be published as a series. Anstat, a publisher in Melbourne, has written to law libraries offering subscriptions to a Statutory Rules series on B5 paper. If a commercial publisher can do this surely Ausinfo, with easier access to the information, should be able to do it. To an outside observer it appears to be easier to produce a Statutory Rules series than set up subscriptions by subject. If a Statutory Rules series is not published those libraries needing a full set of Statutory Rules will be forced to pay twice as much, of which half will be for material they do not need.

### **B5 Format**

Most law libraries favour the retention of B5 format for pamphlet as well as bound copies. The main reason given by members for retention of B5 was the expense of changing to A4. Existing B5 binders which have been very expensive to purchase will not be able to be used. New shelving will be required to house the binders. The new series will be shelved in the same area as the current Statutory Rules and lack of space or rigid shelving prevents adjustment of shelves to fit. If AusInfo intends producing A4 binders at the same price as the old B5 binders, most libraries will be faced with a huge bill, especially if they maintain more than one set. Secondly the existing series sits comfortably on library shelving close to the Acts. It is difficult to shelve A4 binders. Library shelving is not designed for A4 material which is too deep and too high. A4 binders are extremely difficult to handle. Anyone who has handled SA legislation has experienced this difficulty. A4 material will be more expensive to bind. AGPS had indicated the yearly bound volumes may continue to be published in B5 because it is less expensive. If AusInfo carries out the intention of AGPS and reduces the size for a bound series there seem no logical reason why the same could not be done for a pamphlet series.

### **Indexes**

Regular publication of comprehensive indexes is essential. With the present series, libraries receive monthly listings of Statutory Rules made, reprinted and repealed. Gazettes provide weekly updates. Law libraries will be disadvantaged if a similar service is not provided once FRLI is operational. The Bill provides for a comprehensive index on the Register. All librarians would like to see this index available in hard copy and published weekly. Indexes will be even more important if we are unable to subscribe to a Statutory Rules series. For libraries unable to afford the new series, published up-to-date indexes are essential. If the index from the Register does not contain numerical and alphabetical listings of new instruments made and a list of repealed instruments such lists should also be published weekly. It will be extremely difficult to keep track of sunseting and whether for some reason sunseting is set aside or delayed.

## Subject Subscriptions

The general feeling among law librarians is that the subject approach is unsatisfactory. Court libraries in particular found the number of subject areas inadequate. There are over 750 subjects listed in Wicks "Subject Index to the Commonwealth Acts". Although such a list would be impossible to manage the AusInfo list should be more comprehensive and based on this index. The subjects themselves are too broad and subject to individual interpretation. Libraries subscribing will end up either with material not required, or missing out on material because AusInfo's interpretation is different from theirs. Duplication is going to be a problem but may be minimised with a more comprehensive list. Some librarians suggested that the purchase of instruments made under particular Acts would be more satisfactory. Subject subscriptions will be considered by some libraries as an option to reduce cost if a Statutory Rules series subscription is not available. Other libraries such as court libraries do not have a choice because they need to have all Statutory Rules on hand. If a subject approach is followed broad topics should be broken down in the same way as tax. Suggested additions to the list are Bankruptcy or Insolvency, Native Title, Transport - Railways, Roads, and Road Transport and Tribunals to be added to Judiciary and Courts.

## Consolidation

All librarians requested consolidations. Hard copy consolidations are essential in the legal environment. Librarians realise that the Register does not provide for consolidations but that they will be available from ScalePlus. We suggest that AusInfo come to an agreement with ScalePlus for the publication of consolidations. Lawyers need consolidated legislation. It would be a nightmare to try to use some regulations which are amended regularly without consolidation. The only question is whether these consolidations would be authorised copies.

## Conclusion

The ALLG urges AusInfo to consider all the issues and concerns raised above. Proposed arrangements are not adequate nor financially viable for law libraries. AGPS has been recorded as stating that no one would

be disadvantaged by FRLI. Law libraries and those working in the legal environment will be disadvantaged by FRLI unless arrangements can be made to ensure a continuation of the present level of service which includes the publication of:

- (1) *The Statutory Rules pamphlet series on B5 paper,*
- (2) *Regular indexes; and*
- (3) *Consolidation of the Statutory Rules series*

## Joanne Pentony

ALLG Representative on the AusInfo-ACLIS  
Liaison Committee

---

## *From Around the Country*

### *NSW Division*

On August 6 the NSW Division held their third annual publishers' forum. The forum was attended by a large number of librarians, publishers and guests, who not only braved the somewhat biblical downpour, but also contributed to a lively and interesting discussion. Once again this proved to be an invaluable source of information sharing between the two faces of the legal information coin. We look forward to seeing you all at an equally fruitful event next year.

Our especial thanks go to Rob Brian, the NSW Parliamentary Librarian for providing us with the venue, and for chairing the meeting with his trademark calm and gravitas.

## Niall O'Driscoll

Australian Securities & Investments Commission  
ocslib@asc.gov.au

---

### *Victorian Division*

In Victoria, Greig Williams has been joined by Michelle Bendall, Lynda Stewart and Althea Ward to form a Publishers Liaison Committee. The Committee will continue to act on behalf of the ALLG(Vic), bringing to the attention of publishers, the issues that are of broad concern to members.

In addition, the newly formed committee will act as a forum through which publishers will be encouraged to broadcast customer service matters to the group. It

is hoped that this role will help to improve the exchange of relevant information and restore consistency of communication. The committee has recently contacted the main publishers to encourage their use of the PLC in this manner. Greig Williams will continue to act as the contact for the PLC in Victoria

**Greig Williams**  
Law Institute of Victoria  
greigw@liv.asn.au

### **Western Australian Division**

WA Legislation is on the 'net at last! It is now available at two sites - Austlii or on the WA Government's site at <http://www.slp.wa.gov.au:8080/statutes/swans.nsf>. On the subject of electronic legislation, Vivienne Webb and Lorna Mathie have recently written an article comparing WA legislation published on CD-ROM. The article provides a detailed comparison of legislation published by Aunty Abha and Computer Law Services. Check it out in the latest issue of Brief - Webb, V and Mathie, L. "WA Legislation on CD ROM - a comparison" (1998) Brief Vol 25 No 6 p16

Another new initiative in WA is the development of the Practitioners Legal Electronic Access Service (PLEAS) online database. PLEAS provides ongoing electronic access to judgments from the Supreme Court of WA since June 1991 and the District Court of WA since April 1996. Further information can be requested from the Wendy Ryan at the Supreme Court of WA Library on [lawlib@ca.com.au](mailto:lawlib@ca.com.au)

In addition, the WA Division has written a letter to CCH outlining problems with the product descriptions on invoices. Not all products are described in a useful way to allow retrieval of records of subscriptions. We will keep you informed of any developments in this regard.

**Vivienne Webb**  
Jackson McDonald  
VEW@jacmac.com.au

# **ANSTAT.** **Putting the law** **within easy reach.**



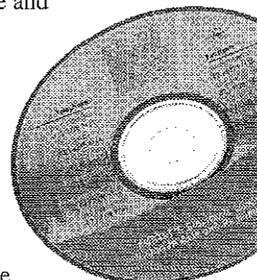
Anstat's electronic legislation service on CD-ROM and the Internet is fast, reliable and best of all, inexpensive.

You can keep abreast of legislative changes with monthly updates for only \$500 per annum

And a full year's subscription also gives you unlimited access to our Internet site which is updated WEEKLY and FREE support through the Legislation Hotline and Electronic Help Desk

Anstat offers separate services for Victorian and New South Wales Acts and Regulations

The service has the same appearance of the traditional hard copy version but gives you the added benefit of a powerful search function across the entire database and fast access to the section you need.



**[www.anstat.com.au](http://www.anstat.com.au)**

Amending legislation is included and linked to Principal Legislation. A 'What's New' folder provides currency details, listings of new legislation since the last release and much more.

To find out more about our subscription services contact us now on telephone: (03) 9278 1144, or e-mail: [service@anstat.com.au](mailto:service@anstat.com.au)

**ANSTAT.**  
**Legislation**  
**NOW!**

