

Does the Government need assistance?

If you have ever wondered what happened to those reports by the Industries Assistance Commission on, for example, the Publishing Industry — read on.

At the end of 1979, the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, Mr R.V. Garland, and the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Mr Phillip Lynch, announced the Government's decision regarding the Industries Assistance Commission report of 17 October 1979 on the Publishing Industry.

Findings and recommendations of the Commission

The Commission finds that a case for direct assistance to the publishing industry was not demonstrated, and recommends that:

Rec 1 *Government financed grants to publishers by the Literature Board should be discontinued;*

Rec 2 *No assistance by way of grants should be accorded the publication of works claimed to be of exceptional merit or of national importance or to fulfil special needs;*

Rec 4 *Public Lending Right payments to publishers should be abolished.*

Government decision: The Government has not accepted the Commission's recommendations that the present forms of assistance to the publishing industry should be discontinued and has therefore decided that Literature Board Grants and Public Lending Right payments to publishers should continue.

In reaching this decision the Government took into consideration that the cost of this assistance to the community is relatively low and that assistance for the production and publications of Australian cultural works is consistent with its objectives of promoting excellence in the arts.

The Government has decided it wishes to retain the option to assist the publication of works of exceptional merit or of national importance or to fulfil special needs as the need arises, and that in this context the question of assistance for the production of Braille works should be further examined.

Rec 3 *The Postal Services Act 1975 should be amended so as to free the Australian Postal Commission from the necessity of seeking Ministerial approval for the prices it sets for the delivery of publications.*

Government decision: The Government has decided not to amend the Postal Services Act 1975 so as to free the Australian Postal Commission from the necessity of seeking Ministerial approval for the price it sets for the delivery of registered publications as recommended by the Commission.

In making this decision the Government considers the present arrangements do not prevent the Australian Postal Commission from seeking a variation in these rates at any time.

Rec 5 *There should be a review of copyright legislation, with emphasis on the hidden costs it generates.*

Government decision: As the Attorney-General's Department is currently reviewing a number of aspects of copyright legislation the Government has decided not to conduct a further review along the lines recommended by the Commission.

Rec 6 *Separate government funding of the publication of research results should be discontinued.*

Government decision: In respect of the Commission's recommendation that separate Government funding of the publication of research results should be discontinued the

Government has decided that this matter should be examined further and that the Department of Science and the Environment should examine the question of Government support for publication of research results and other scholarly works.

Rec 7 *The publishing activities of government agencies should not provide unfair competition to private enterprise publishers.*

Government decision: The Ministers noted that Government publishing activities have already been considered in the context of the Government's decisions on the Joint Committee on Publications report on 'The Australian Government Publishing Service and Its Role in Commonwealth Printing and Publishing'. However the Government accepts the principle that the publishing activities of Government agencies should not provide unfair competition to private enterprise publishers.

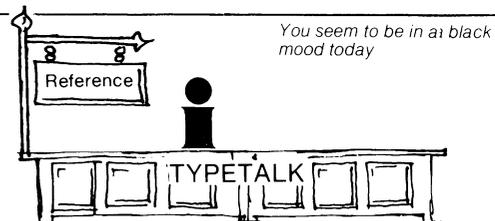
It does make you wonder, doesn't it?

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