



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FACT SHEETS

FACT SHEET 15: TABLING OF REPORTS AND OTHER PAPERS

Each sitting day, before the House proceeds to the ordinary business of the day, the President calls for the tabling of papers. Papers tabled in the House include annual reports of government departments and statutory authorities required to be presented to Parliament under the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985* and the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984*, other documents required or desired to be tabled by a minister, committee reports tabled by the Chair of a committee, statutory rules and instruments subject to disallowance under the *Interpretation Act 1987* and reports received when the House was not sitting, tabled by the Clerk.

Under the standing orders all papers and documents laid upon the Table by the President, a minister or the clerk are considered to be public, unless otherwise ordered by the House (SO 54(3)). Other members may table documents by leave, and unless authorised by the House to be made public, such documents are available for inspection by members of the House only (SO 54(4)). The publication of a document by order or under the authority of the House attracts absolute privilege under section 27 of the *Defamation Act 2005*.

Once a document has been tabled, other than a petition or a return to an address or order, a motion may be made that it be printed (SO 57). On the first sitting day of each month a list of papers tabled in the previous month and not ordered to be printed is tabled by a minister. On tabling of the list, a motion may be moved without notice, that certain papers on the list be printed (SO 59).

Certain acts, including the *Ombudsman Act 1974* and the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988* require that certain reports be submitted to the President. After receiving the report, if the House is sitting, the President immediately tables the report, at which time it becomes available to the public. If the House is not sitting, the President receives the report and, under the Act, authorises it to be made public forthwith. When the House next sits the President announces receipt of the report.

Standing order 55 provides that where an act requires that a report or other document be tabled in the House by a minister, and the House is not sitting, the report or document may be lodged with the Clerk. A report lodged with the Clerk is deemed to have been tabled in the House and to have been published by order or under the authority of the House and is immediately available to the public.

Under standing order 231 if the House is not sitting when a committee wishes to report to the House, the committee may present copies of its report to the Clerk, at which time the report is also deemed to have been tabled in the House and to have been published by order or under the authority of the House and is immediately available to the public.