INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991

NEW SOUTH WALES



EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This Explanatory Note relates to this Bill as introduced into Parliament)

The object of this Bill is to address a number of procedural matters in the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 and in particular to enlarge the discretion of the Commission to decide, in the public interest, to hold hearings in private.

Clause 1 specifies the short title of the proposed Act.

Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act.

Clause 3 is a formal provision giving effect to the Schedule of amendments.

SCHEDULE 1—AMENDMENTS

Providing evidence and information to other authorities

Schedule 1 (1) provides greater flexibility for the Commission to furnish evidence of criminal offences that it has obtained in the course of its investigations. The amendments enable the Commission to furnish the evidence directly to interstate or Commonwealth authorities (as well as to the Attorney General as the Act provides at present). Again, the amendments would allow the Commission to report relevant matters directly to a New South Wales public authority (as well as to the authority's Minister, as the Act provides at present).

Public and private hearings

Schedule 1 (2) is aimed at giving the Commission a greater discretion to determine whether or not to conduct a hearing in public or in private, including closing submissions. The Commission would be obliged to have regard to matters which it

considers to be related to the public interest. At present, the Commission may not direct that a hearing be heard in private unless "it is satisfied that it is desirable to do so in the public interest for reasons connected with the subject-matter of the investigation or the nature of the evidence to be given": section 31 (4).

Groups and unincorporated associations

Schedule 1 (3) inserts a provision that expressly authorises groups and unincorporated associations to appear at and be represented at hearings before the Commission.

Legal and financial assistance

Schedule 1 (4) deals with the grant of legal or financial assistance to a witness before the Commission. It is proposed that assistance may be granted after consideration of the prospect of hardship to the witness if assistance is declined, the significance of the witness's evidence, or any other matter relating to the public interest.

Reports of Parliamentary Joint Committee

Schedule 1 (5) covers the situation where the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption wishes to furnish a report, but Parliament is not in session. The Committee would transmit the report to the Clerk of a House, who is authorised to have it printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991

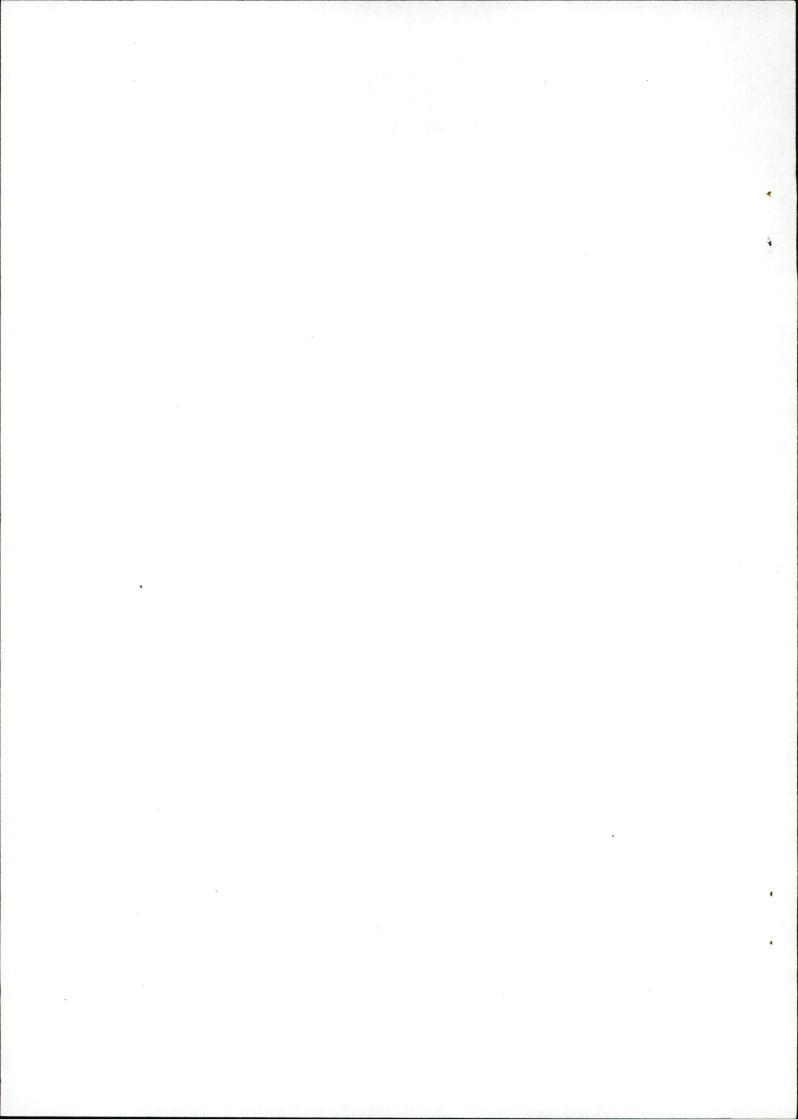
NEW SOUTH WALES



TABLE OF PROVISIONS

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SCHEDULE 1—AMENDMENTS



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991

NEW SOUTH WALES



No. , 1991

A BILL FOR

An Act to amend the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 in relation to hearings conducted by the Commission, the giving of legal or financial assistance to witnesses, and the furnishing by the Commission of evidence or information to authorities; and for other purposes.

The Legislature of New South Wales enacts:

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the Independent Commission Against Corruption (Amendment) Act 1991.

Commencement

2. This Act commences on the date of assent.

Amendment of Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 No. 35

3. The Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 is amended as set out in Schedule 1.

SCHEDULE 1—AMENDMENTS

(Sec. 3)

- (1) Section 14 (Other functions of Commission):
 - (a) Omit section 14 (1) (b), insert instead:
 - (b) to furnish other evidence obtained in the course of its investigations (being evidence that may be admissible in the prosecution of a person for a criminal offence against a law of another State, the Commonwealth or a Territory) to the Attorney General or to the appropriate authority of the jurisdiction concerned.
 - (b) After section 14 (1), insert:
 - (1A) Evidence of the kind referred to in subsection (1) (b) may be accompanied by any observations that the Commission considers appropriate and (in the case of evidence furnished to the Attorney General) recommendations as to what action the Commission considers should be taken in relation to the evidence.
 - (1B) A copy or detailed description of any evidence furnished to the appropriate authority of another jurisdiction, together with a copy of any accompanying observations, is to be furnished to the Attorney General.
 - (c) Omit section 14 (2), insert instead:
 - (2) If the Commission obtains any information in the course of its investigations relating to the exercise of the functions of a public authority, the Commission may, if it considers it desirable to do so:

- (a) furnish the information or a report on the information to the authority or to the Minister for the authority; and
- (b) make to the authority or the Minister for the authority such recommendations (if any) relating to the exercise of the functions of the authority as the Commission considers appropriate.
- (2A) A copy of any information or report furnished to a public authority under subsection (2), together with a copy of any such recommendation, is to be furnished to the Minister for the authority.

(2) Section 31:

Omit the section, insert instead:

Public and private hearings

- 31. (1) A hearing may be held in public or in private, or partly in public and partly in private, as decided by the Commission.
- (2) Without limiting the above, the Commission may decide to hear closing submissions in private. This extends to a closing submission by a person appearing before the Commission or by a legal practitioner representing such a person, as well as to a closing submission by a legal practitioner assisting the Commission as counsel.
- (3) In reaching these decisions, the Commission is obliged to have regard to any matters which it considers to be related to the public interest.
- (4) The Commission may give directions as to the persons who may be present at a hearing when it is being held in private. A person must not be present at a hearing in contravention of any such direction.

(3) Section 33A:

After section 33, insert:

Groups and unincorporated associations

33A. (1) A group or unincorporated association may be authorised to appear at a hearing or authorised or required to give evidence at a hearing.

- (2) Accordingly, references in sections 32 and 33, and in other provisions of this Act, to a "person" extend for this purpose to a group or unincorporated association.
- (3) However, this section does not affect the application in any other context of the principle that a reference to a word in the singular form includes a reference to the word in the plural form.

(4) Section 52:

Omit the section, insert instead:

Legal and financial assistance

- 52. (1) A witness who is appearing or about to appear before the Commission may apply to the Attorney General for legal or financial assistance.
- (2) The Attorney General may approve the provision of legal or financial assistance to the applicant if of the opinion that this is appropriate, having regard to any one or more of the following:
 - (a) the prospect of hardship to the witness if assistance is declined;
 - (b) the significance of the evidence that the witness is giving or appears likely to give;
 - (c) any other matter relating to the public interest.
- (3) On giving the approval, the Attorney General may authorise the provision to the witness of legal or financial assistance determined by the Attorney General in respect of the witness's appearance before the Commission. The assistance is to be provided out of money provided by Parliament for the purpose.
- (4) The assistance may be provided unconditionally or subject to conditions determined by the Attorney General.

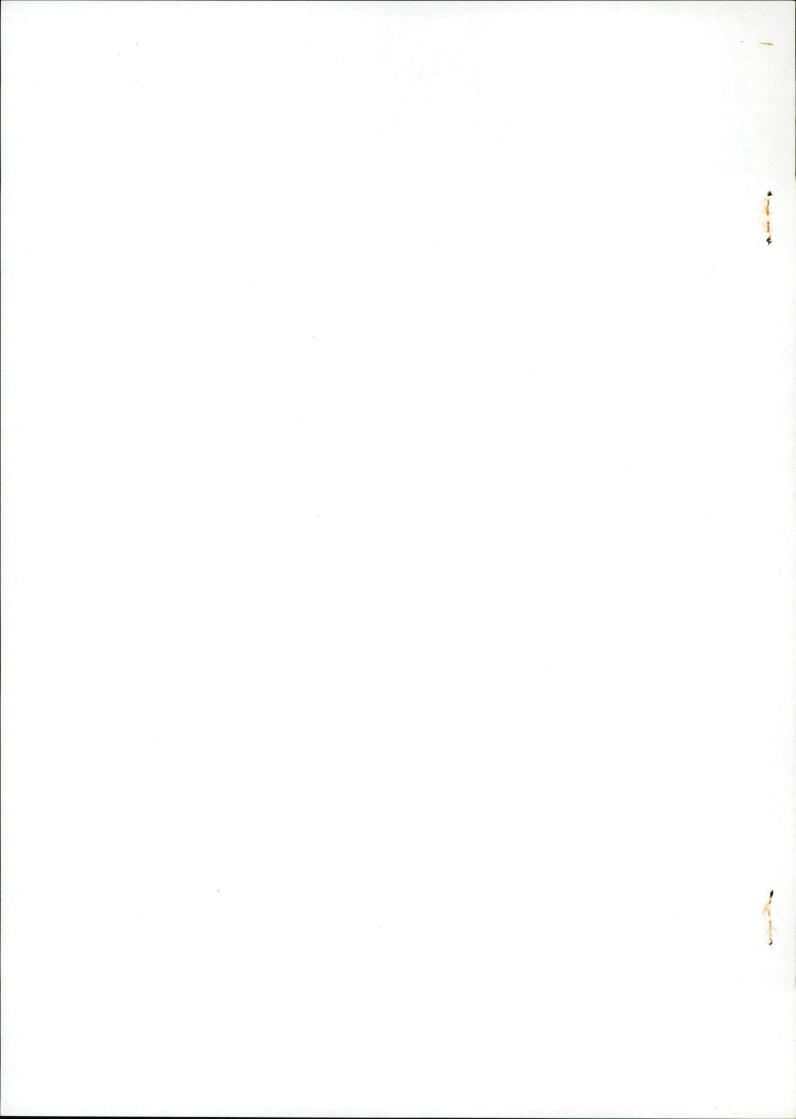
(5) Section 68A:

After section 68, insert:

Procedure if Parliament not in session

68A. (1) If a House of Parliament is not sitting when the Joint Committee seeks to furnish a report to it, the Committee may present copies of the report to the Clerk of the House.

- (2) The report:
- (a) on presentation and for all purposes is taken to have been laid before the House; and
- (b) may be printed by authority of the Clerk; and
- (c) if printed by authority of the Clerk, is for all purposes taken to be a document published by or under the authority of the House; and
- (d) is to be recorded in the Minutes, or Votes and Proceedings, of the House on the first sitting day of the House after receipt of the report by the Clerk.



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991

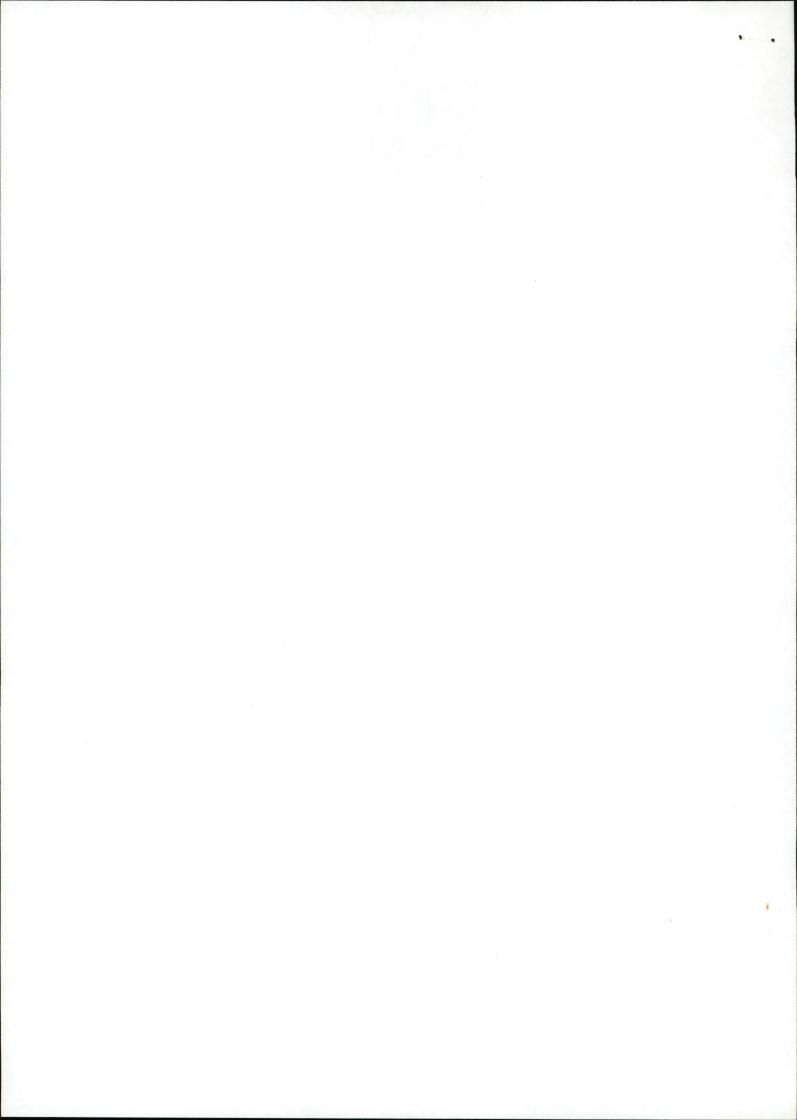
MR PRESIDENT,

I MOVE THAT THIS BILL BE NOW READ A SECOND TIME. ..

MR PRESIDENT,

THE PRINCIPAL OBJECT OF THIS BILL IS TO GIVE EFFECT
TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY
JOINT COMMITTEE REGARDING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
HEARINGS OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST
CORRUPTION. THE BILL ALSO MAKES A NUMBER OF
MINOR MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL TO
ADDRESS PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS THAT HAVE EMERGED
SINCE THE ICAC COMMENCED OPERATION.

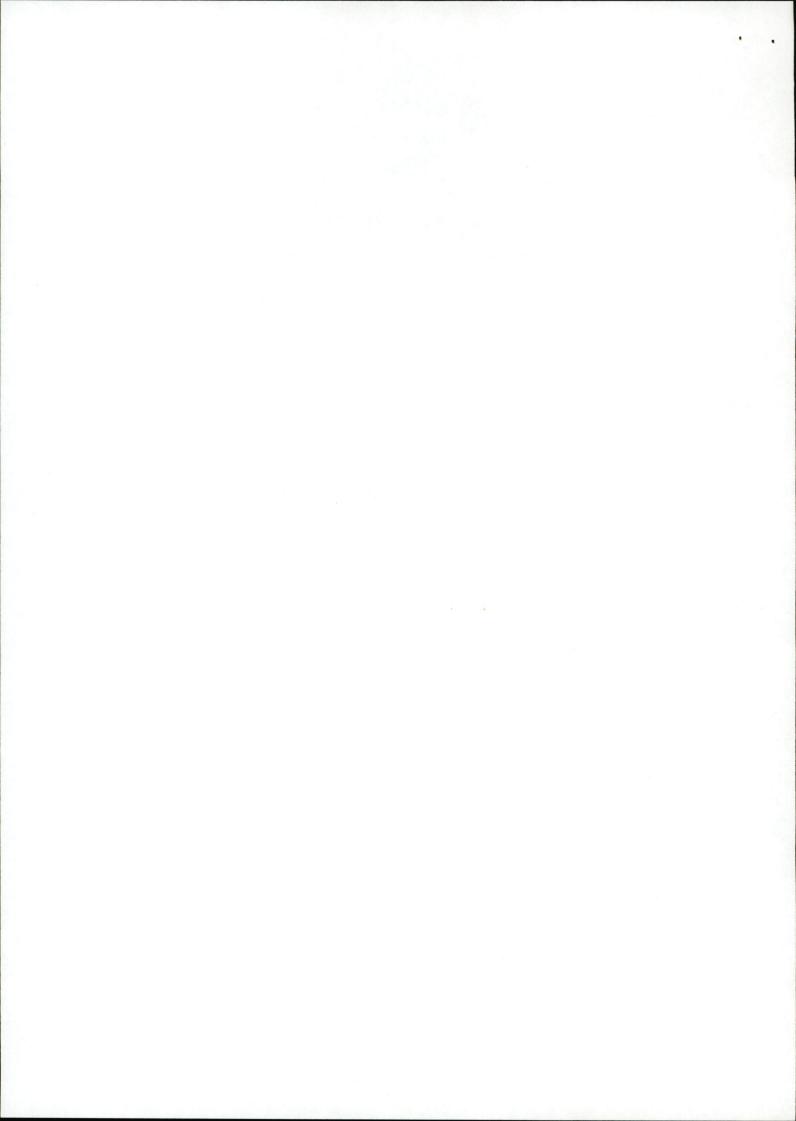
THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE WAS SET UP TO PROVIDE A MECHANISM FOR CONTINUING SCRUTINY OF THE ICAC AND THE EXERCISE OF ITS FUNCTIONS. THE BILL IN ADOPTING THE MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE IN THE REPORT OF ITS INQUIRY INTO COMMISSION PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF



WITNESSES IS A TRIBUTE TO THE THOROUGHNESS OF THAT INQUIRY.

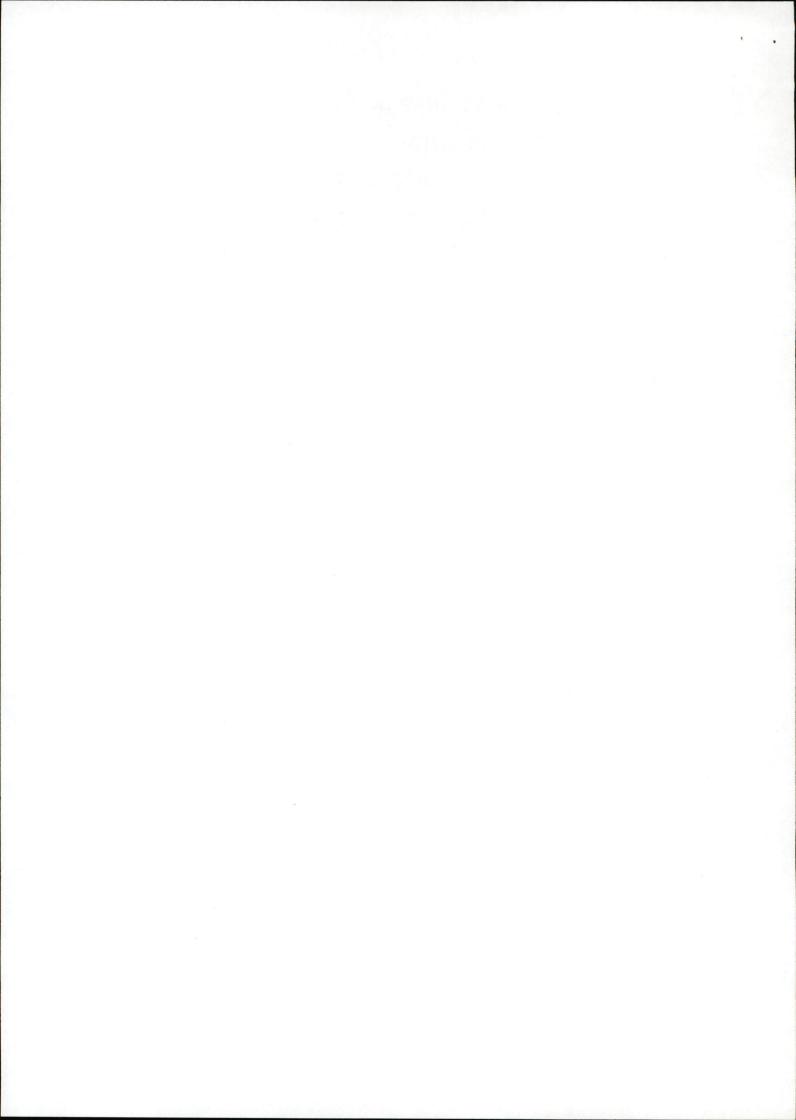
EARLY IN 1990 THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE, MR KERR, ASKED MR ATHOL MOFFITT QC FOR HIS VIEWS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES CONCERNING THE ICAC. MR MOFFITT'S DOCUMENT, "OPENNESS AND SECRECY IN INQUIRIES INTO ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION: QUESTIONS OF DAMAGE TO REPUTATIONS" WAS RELEASED AS A DISCUSSION PAPER. THE JOINT COMMITTEE SUBSEQUENTLY ANNOUNCED AN INQUIRY INTO MATTERS RELATING TO ICAC HEARINGS AND THE RIGHTS OF WITNESSES. TWO PUBLIC HEARINGS WERE HELD IN OCTOBER 1990 AT WHICH THE COMMISSIONER, MR TEMBY QC, AND MR MOFFITT GAVE EVIDENCE. SUBMISSIONS WERE ALSO RECEIVED FROM WITNESSES AND LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAD APPEARED AT ICAC HEARINGS.

THE COMMITTEE IN ITS FIRST REPORT OF ITS INQUIRY RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS, POINTING OUT THAT EXPOSURE IS A KEY WEAPON IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SECRET CRIME OF CORRUPTION.



FURTHERMORE, PUBLIC HEARINGS ENSURE THAT THE ICAC IS PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE AND THAT THE WAY IN WHICH IT EXERCISES ITS SPECIAL POWERS IS OPEN TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY. THE JOINT COMMITTEE THEREFORE RECOMMENDED THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS BE ADHERED TO AND THAT THE ICAC SHOULD CONTINUE TO HOLD MOST OF ITS HEARINGS IN PUBLIC.

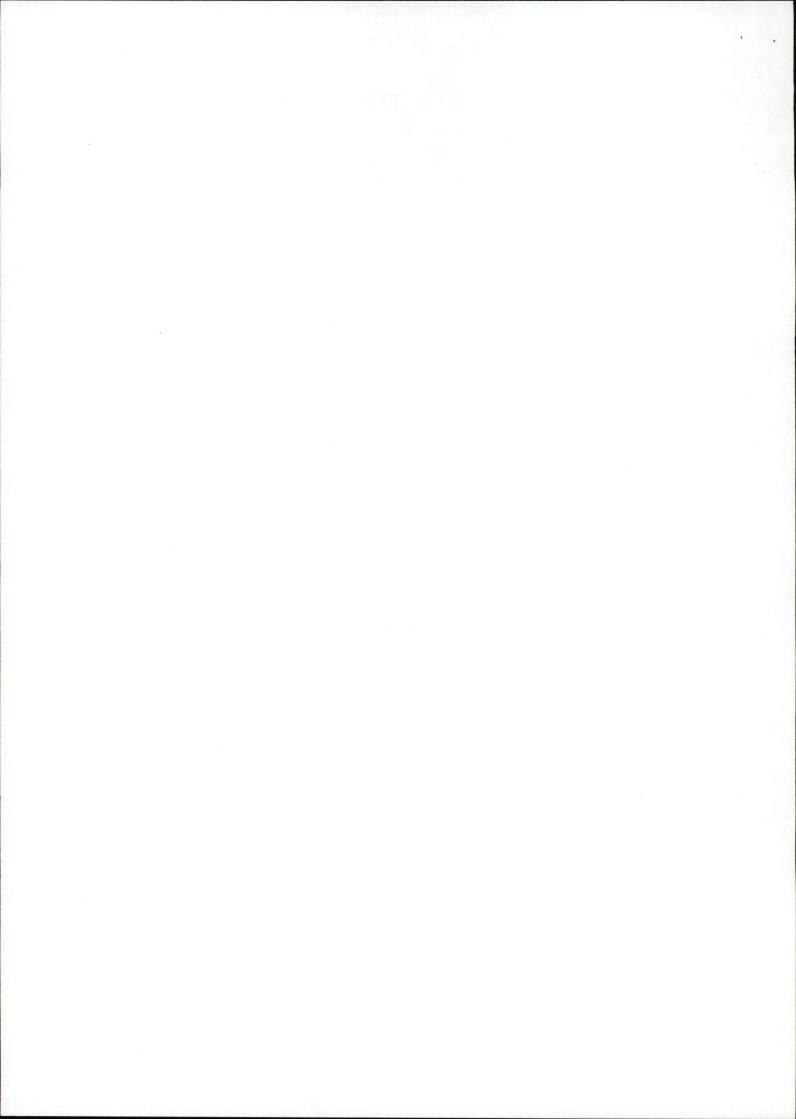
HOWEVER THE COMMITTEE WAS RIGHTLY CONCERNED WITH THE UNNECESSARY DAMAGE TO REPUTATIONS WHICH MAY RESULT FROM PUBLIC HEARINGS. UNSUPPORTED ASSERTIONS MAY BE MADE IN THE COURSE OF AN OPEN HEARING. THEY MAY LATER PROVE TO BE WORTHLESS BUT IN THE MEANTIME ARE GIVEN SENSATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE. EVIDENCE UNDERMINING WHAT WAS EARLIER PUBLISHED ABOUT THE PERSON IS UNLIKELY TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE TO THE PERSON'S REPUTATION. BOTH THE COMMITTEE AND MR TEMBY WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT MEDIA REPORTING OF CLOSING SUBMISSIONS. THERE IS EVIDENCE OF A STRONG TENDENCY TO ASSUME THAT THE CLOSING SUBMISSIONS OF COUNSEL ASSISTING THE COMMISSION REPRESENT THE PROVISIONAL VIEWS OF THE COMMISSION. THUS THE COMMITTEE SUGGESTED



THAT SPECIFIC STEPS NEED TO BE TAKEN TO GUARD AGAINST THIS HAPPENING.

THE COMMITTEE CONSIDERED DETAILED LEGISLATIVE
AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY MR MOFFITT GIVING
WITNESSES AN EXPRESS STATUTORY RIGHT TO APPLY.
FOR A PRIVATE HEARING. HOWEVER THE COMMISSION
OBJECTED TO THE AMENDMENTS ON THE GROUND THAT
THEY WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO LITIGATION WHICH
WOULD DELAY AND FRUSTRATE THE COMMISSION'S
INVESTIGATIONS. FURTHER, THERE WAS NO NEED, THE
COMMISSION SAID, FOR THE RIGHT TO APPLY FOR
PRIVATE HEARINGS TO BE LEGISLATED BECAUSE THE
COMMISSION ALREADY SAT IN PRIVATE IN RESPONSE TO
SUCH APPLICATIONS OR ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE.

THE COMMITTEE ACCEPTED THE COMMISSION'S
SUBMISSION AND RECOMMENDED THAT ALTERNATIVE
AVENUES BE EXPLORED BEFORE MR MOFFITT'S
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO THE ACT. IT
SUGGESTED THAT THE COMMISSION AMEND ITS
DOCUMENT ENTITLED "PROCEDURE AT PUBLIC
HEARINGS" TO NOTE THAT THE COMMISSION WILL HEAR
AND CONSIDER APPLICATIONS FOR PRIVATE HEARINGS.



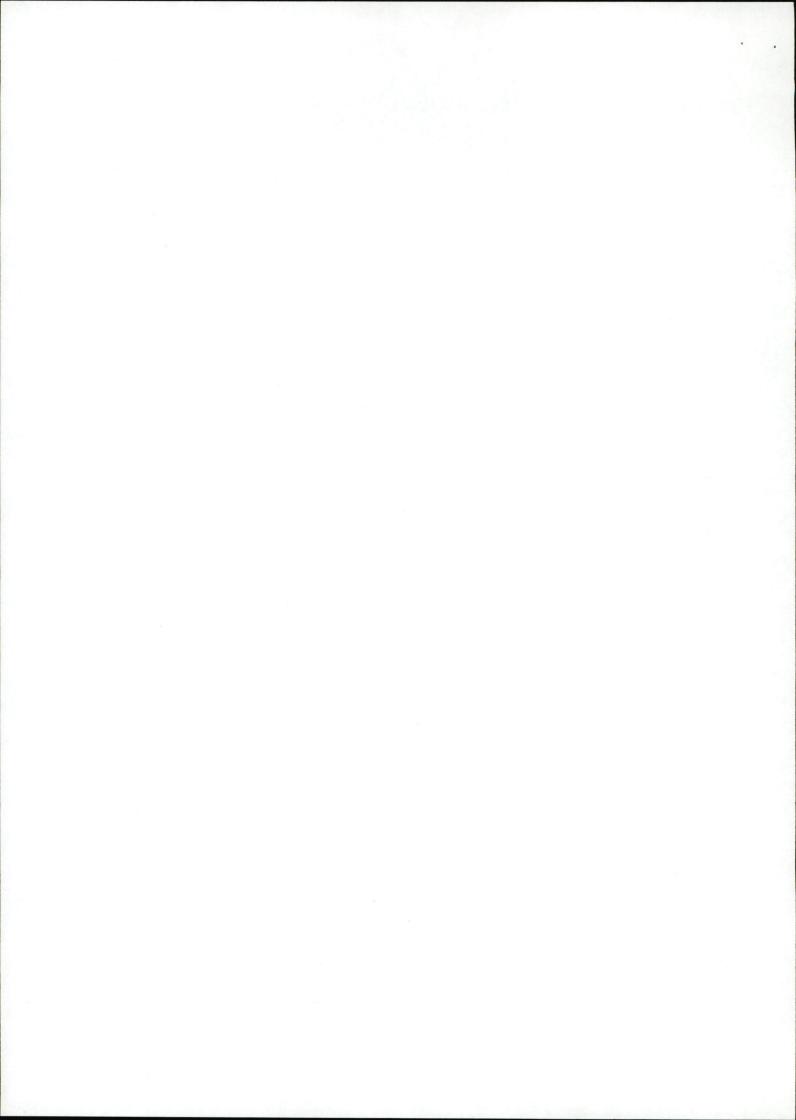
THE COMMISSION HAS ACTED ON THIS RECOMMENDATION.

MR PRESIDENT,

THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT.
THE ICAC IS ABLE TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY AND
EFFICIENTLY AND THUS SUPPORTS THE APPROACH OF
THE JOINT COMMITTEE IN WISHING TO AVOID
AMENDMENTS TO THE ICAC ACT IN WHICH THE
LIKELIHOOD OF LITIGATION IS INHERENT.

MR PRESIDENT,

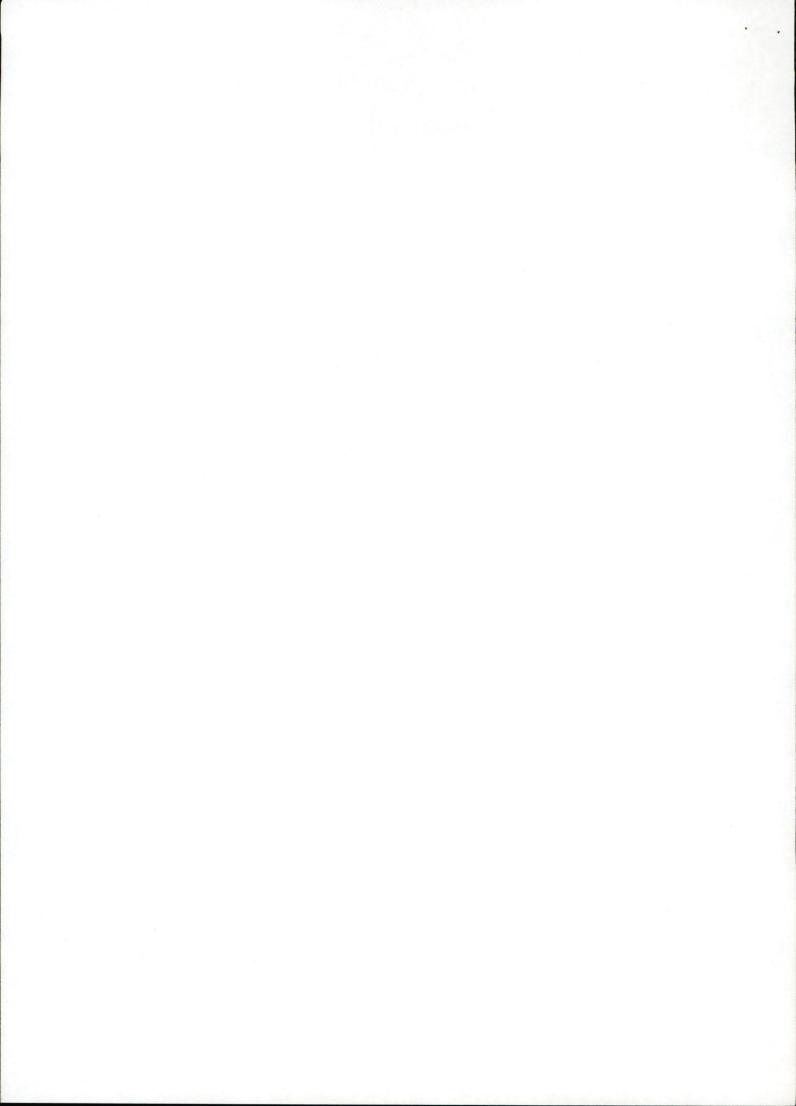
PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF PUBLIC HEARINGS. THE
COMMISSION ARGUED BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE
THAT THE ACT BE AMENDED TO GIVE THE COMMISSION A
GREATER DISCRETION TO DETERMINE WHETHER TO HOLD
A HEARING IN PUBLIC OR IN PRIVATE. THE COMMISSION
SHOULD HAVE REGARD TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN
MAKING A DECISION. THE JOINT COMMITTEE AGREED
WITH THIS RECOMMENDATION AND ALSO SUGGESTED
AGAIN THAT THE COMMISSION AMEND ITS PROCEDURAL



DOCUMENT TO SET OUT THE GROUNDS ON WHICH THE COMMISSION WILL CONSIDER AN APPLICATION FOR A PRIVATE HEARING. THE COMMISSION HAS IMPLEMENTED THAT SUGGESTION ALSO.

THE BILL BEFORE THE HOUSE GIVES EFFECT TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE. IT ENSURES THAT THE COMMISSION HAS GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO HOLD A HEARING IN PUBLIC OR IN PRIVATE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT PUBLIC HEARINGS WILL CEASE TO BE THE NORM. MR TEMBY IN HIS SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE INDICATED THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD SIT IN PRIVATE ONLY A LITTLE MORE THAN IT DOES AT PRESENT. THE TOUCHSTONE FOR MAKING THE DECISION TO SIT IN PRIVATE OR IN PUBLIC IS THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST IS USUALLY BEST SERVED BY SITTING IN PUBLIC.

THE BILL AVOIDS ATTEMPTING TO EXHAUSTIVELY LIST
THE FACTORS WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO THE PUBLIC
INTEREST. THIS ALLOWS THE MYRIAD OF MATTERS THAT
ARISE IN THE COURSE OF AN INQUIRY AND THAT MAY NOT
BE FORESEEABLE AT ITS COMMENCEMENT TO BE



BALANCED IN DETERMINING WHETHER A HEARING OR PART OF A HEARING SHOULD BE HELD IN PUBLIC OR IN PRIVATE.

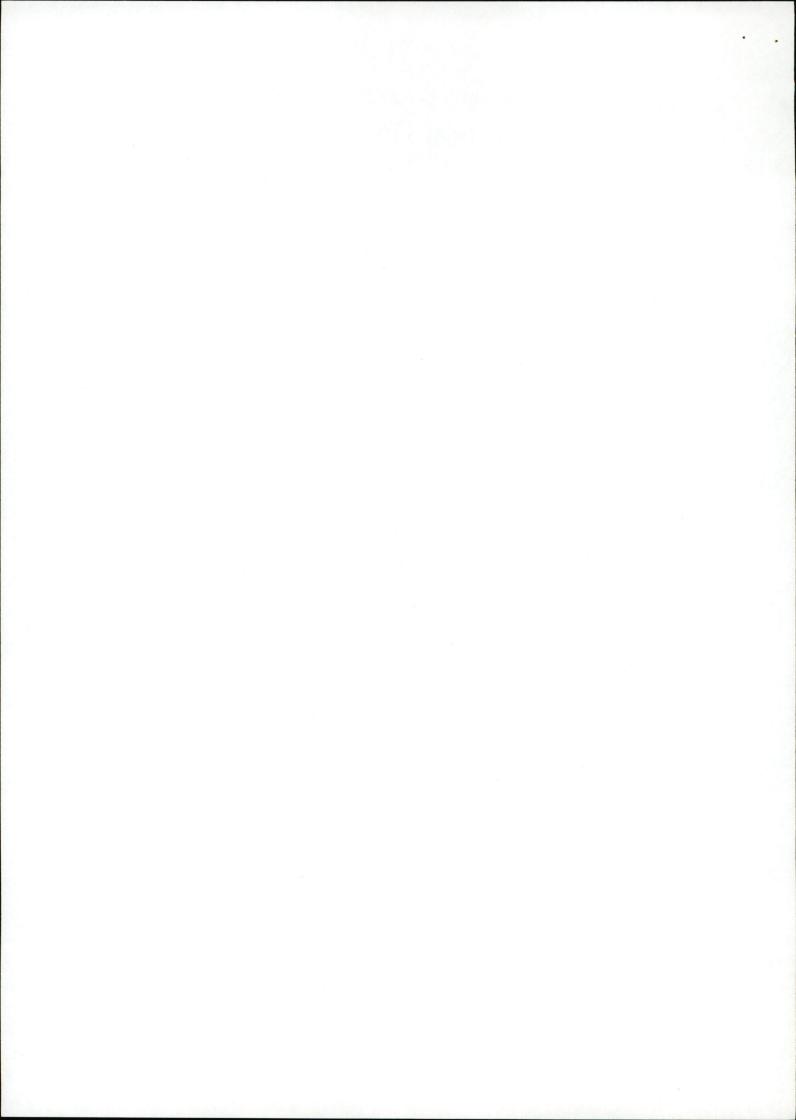
THE BILL ALSO EXPRESSLY AUTHORISES THE COMMISSION TO HEAR CLOSING SUBMISSIONS IN PRIVATE.

THESE REFORMS WILL ASSIST IN ENSURING THAT UNWARRANTED DAMAGE TO REPUTATIONS IS AVOIDED.

MR PRESIDENT,

OTHER AMENDMENTS MADE BY THE BILL ARISE OUT OF PROPOSALS INITIALLY PUT FORWARD BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE OR THE COMMISSION. ON LEGAL ADVICE OBTAINED AS A RESULT OF A CONCERN OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE, THE BILL CLARIFIES THE RIGHT OF UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATIONS SUCH AS POLITICAL PARTIES TO APPEAR AND BE LEGALLY REPRESENTED AT COMMISSION HEARINGS.

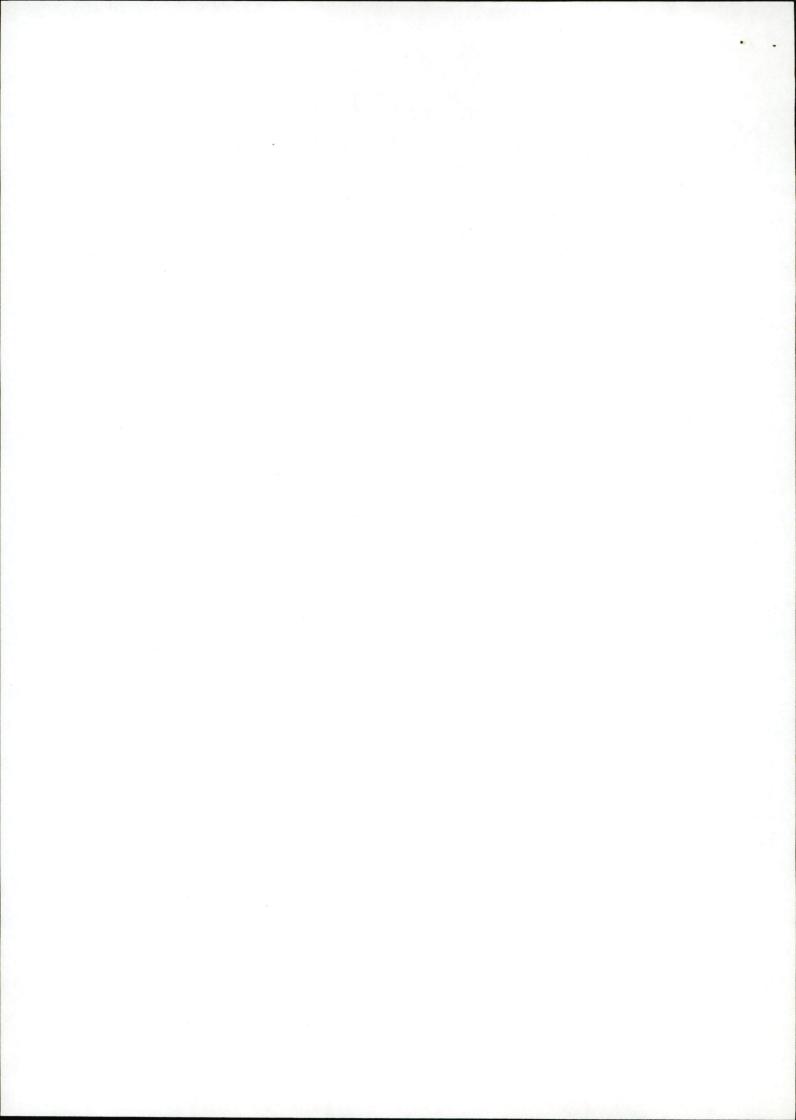
THE BILL ALSO STREAMLINES THE PROCEDURE FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF EVIDENCE OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES



AGAINST A LAW OF THE COMMONWEALTH OR OTHER
STATE TO BE TRANSMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATE
AUTHORITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OR OTHER STATE.
IT ALLOWS INFORMATION ABOUT A PUBLIC AUTHORITY'S
PERFORMANCE TO BE GIVEN DIRECTLY TO THE PUBLIC
AUTHORITY AS WELL AS TO THE RESPONSIBLE MINISTER.

THE ICAC ACT GIVES WITNESSES THE RIGHT TO APPLY TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR FINANCIAL OR LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN RESPECT OF THEIR APPEARANCE BEFORE THE COMMISSION. CURRENTLY THE GROUNDS ON WHICH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY GRANT ASSISTANCE ARE UNDESIRABLY VAGUE. THE BILL CLARIFIES THOSE GROUNDS. THUS THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL BE AUTHORISED TO APPROVE ASSISTANCE BEING GIVEN HAVING REGARD TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS: THE PROSPECT OF HARDSHIP TO THE WITNESS IF ASSISTANCE IS DECLINED, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVIDENCE WHICH THE WITNESS IS LIKELY TO GIVE AND OTHER MATTERS RELEVANT TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

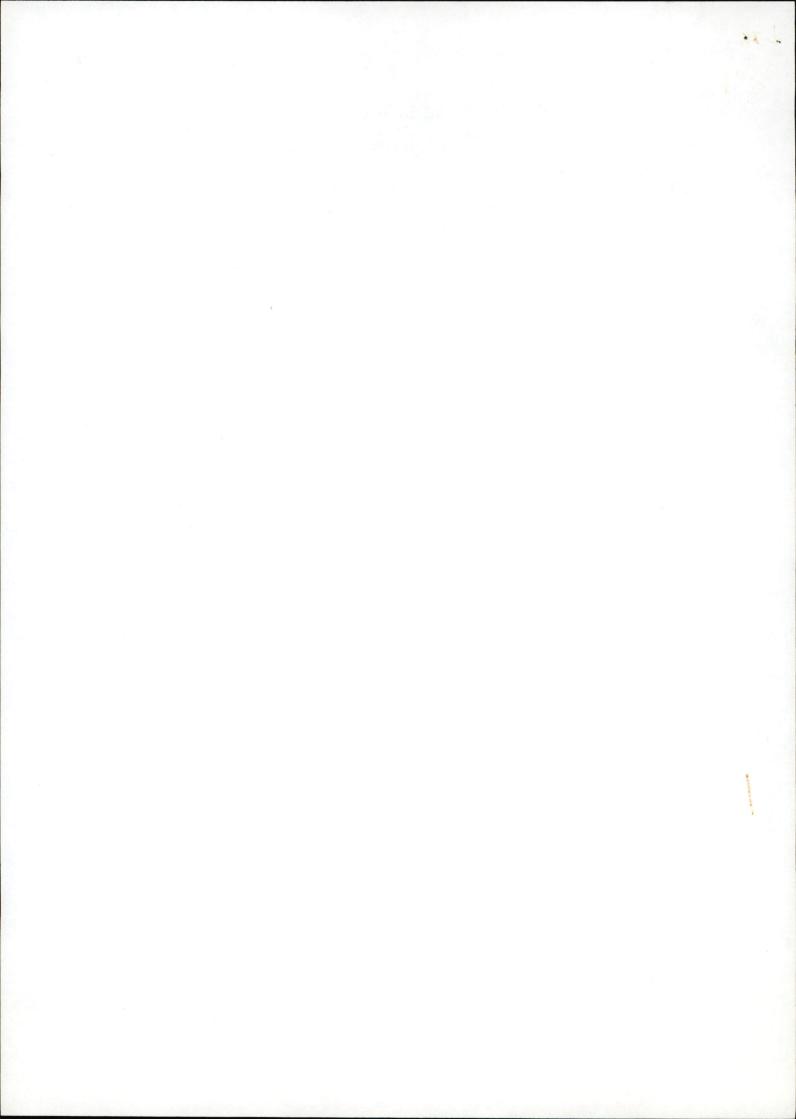
MR PRESIDENT,



THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION CONTINUES TO HAVE THE GOVERNMENT'S STRONG SUPPORT. IT HAS PROVED THAT IT IS A STRONG AND INDEPENDENT INSTITUTION. THE BILL DEMONSTRATES THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO ENSURING THAT THE COMMISSION REMAINS SUCH AN INSTITUTION.

MR PRESIDENT,

I COMMEND THE BILL TO THE HOUSE.



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) ACT 1991 No. 54

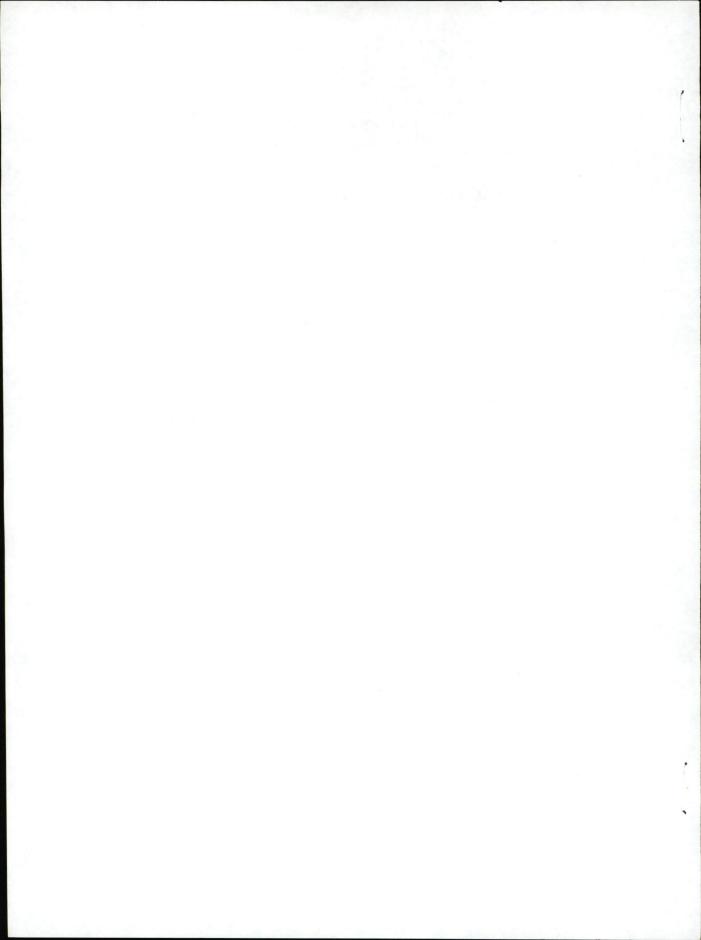
NEW SOUTH WALES



TABLE OF PROVISIONS

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 Amendment of Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 No. 35

SCHEDULE 1—AMENDMENTS



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) ACT 1991 No. 54

NEW SOUTH WALES



Act No. 54, 1991

An Act to amend the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 in relation to hearings conducted by the Commission, the giving of legal or financial assistance to witnesses, and the furnishing by the Commission of evidence or information to authorities; and for other purposes. [Assented to 11 December 1991]

The Legislature of New South Wales enacts:

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the Independent Commission Against Corruption (Amendment) Act 1991.

Commencement

2. This Act commences on the date of assent.

Amendment of Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 No. 35

3. The Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 is amended as set out in Schedule 1.

SCHEDULE 1—AMENDMENTS

(Sec. 3)

- (1) Section 14 (Other functions of Commission):
 - (a) Omit section 14 (1) (b), insert instead:
 - (b) to furnish other evidence obtained in the course of its investigations (being evidence that may be admissible in the prosecution of a person for a criminal offence against a law of another State, the Commonwealth or a Territory) to the Attorney General or to the appropriate authority of the jurisdiction concerned.
 - (b) After section 14 (1), insert:
 - (1A) Evidence of the kind referred to in subsection (1) (b) may be accompanied by any observations that the Commission considers appropriate and (in the case of evidence furnished to the Attorney General) recommendations as to what action the Commission considers should be taken in relation to the evidence.
 - (1B) A copy or detailed description of any evidence furnished to the appropriate authority of another jurisdiction, together with a copy of any accompanying observations, is to be furnished to the Attorney General.
 - (c) Omit section 14 (2), insert instead:
 - (2) If the Commission obtains any information in the course of its investigations relating to the exercise of the functions of a public authority, the Commission may, if it considers it desirable to do so:

- (a) furnish the information or a report on the information to the authority or to the Minister for the authority; and
- (b) make to the authority or the Minister for the authority such recommendations (if any) relating to the exercise of the functions of the authority as the Commission considers appropriate.
- (2A) A copy of any information or report furnished to a public authority under subsection (2), together with a copy of any such recommendation, is to be furnished to the Minister for the authority.

(2) Section 31:

Omit the section, insert instead:

Public and private hearings

- 31. (1) A hearing may be held in public or in private, or partly in public and partly in private, as decided by the Commission.
- (2) Without limiting the above, the Commission may decide to hear closing submissions in private. This extends to a closing submission by a person appearing before the Commission or by a legal practitioner representing such a person, as well as to a closing submission by a legal practitioner assisting the Commission as counsel.
- (3) In reaching these decisions, the Commission is obliged to have regard to any matters which it considers to be related to the public interest.
- (4) The Commission may give directions as to the persons who may be present at a hearing when it is being held in private. A person must not be present at a hearing in contravention of any such direction.

(3) Section 33A:

After section 33, insert:

Groups and unincorporated associations

33A. (1) A group or unincorporated association may be authorised to appear at a hearing or authorised or required to give evidence at a hearing.

- (2) Accordingly, references in sections 32 and 33, and in other provisions of this Act, to a "person" extend for this purpose to a group or unincorporated association.
- (3) However, this section does not affect the application in any other context of the principle that a reference to a word in the singular form includes a reference to the word in the plural form.

(4) Section 52:

Omit the section, insert instead:

Legal and financial assistance

- 52. (1) A witness who is appearing or about to appear before the Commission may apply to the Attorney General for legal or financial assistance.
- (2) The Attorney General may approve the provision of legal or financial assistance to the applicant if of the opinion that this is appropriate, having regard to any one or more of the following:
 - (a) the prospect of hardship to the witness if assistance is declined;
 - (b) the significance of the evidence that the witness is giving or appears likely to give;
 - (c) any other matter relating to the public interest.
- (3) On giving the approval, the Attorney General may authorise the provision to the witness of legal or financial assistance determined by the Attorney General in respect of the witness's appearance before the Commission. The assistance is to be provided out of money provided by Parliament for the purpose.
- (4) The assistance may be provided unconditionally or subject to conditions determined by the Attorney General.

(5) Section 68A:

After section 68, insert:

Procedure if Parliament not in session

68A. (1) If a House of Parliament is not sitting when the Joint Committee seeks to furnish a report to it, the Committee may present copies of the report to the Clerk of the House.

- (2) The report:
- (a) on presentation and for all purposes is taken to have been laid before the House; and
- (b) may be printed by authority of the Clerk; and
- (c) if printed by authority of the Clerk, is for all purposes taken to be a document published by or under the authority of the House; and
- (d) is to be recorded in the Minutes, or Votes and Proceedings, of the House on the first sitting day of the House after receipt of the report by the Clerk.

[Minister's second reading speech made in— Legislative Assembly on 23 October 1991 Legislative Council on 4 December 1991]

