

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Seventy-fourth Report — “Inquiry into Access to Australian Standards Adopted in Delegated Legislation — Terms of Reference” — Tabling

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [9.57 am]: I present for tabling the seventy-fourth report of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation.

[See paper 1996.]

Mr P. ABETZ: This report advises the house that the committee has resolved to conduct an own-motion inquiry into access to Australian standards adopted in delegated legislation. The inquiry arises out of the committee’s scrutiny of delegated legislation. Delegated legislation often adopts Australian standards. The committee’s term of reference 10.7(b) states —

It is also a function of the Committee to inquire into and report on —

...

(b) any systemic issues identified in 2 or more instruments of subsidiary legislation.

The committee has identified a systemic issue relating to access to Australian standards adopted in delegated legislation. The committee has resolved that the inquiry have the following terms of reference —

The Committee will inquire into —

- (a) access to Australian standards adopted or delegated legislation in Western Australia, including the level of free public access to adopted Australian standards in metropolitan and regional Western Australia;
- (b) whether amendments to legislation are required to improve public access to adopted Australian standards;
- (c) other measures to improve public access to adopted Australian standards; measures to improve access to adopted Australian standards provided to the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation; and
- (d) any other related matters that arise during the course of the inquiry.

I commend the report to the house

I will just make a few personal comments on that report. Basically the issue is one that keeps reoccurring; that is, a lot of government regulations and council by-laws include reference to Australian standards. The difficulty is to actually access those standards because it is quite a costly matter for people in various locations to be able to access them. Take a plumber in a place like Mukinbudin as an example. If he has to comply with government regulation that refers to an Australian standard, he cannot just go on the internet to look it up. He has to physically travel to a state facility like the State Library of Western Australia to be able to access it. That simply is impractical and it is creating a lot of issues. The other issue is that sometimes standards are outdated and, again, the accessibility becomes a real problem. It is not a problem only in this country; it is a problem in other jurisdictions as well, I understand. I look forward to this inquiry, and I believe it will be very helpful in seeing what we can do to make sure that these standards become more accessible. I believe that people should have ready access to the full content of any laws or regulations that we make as a government or local government.