

Parliamentary Entitlements Amendment Regulations 2001 (No. 1)

2001 No. 355

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Statutory Rules 2001 No. 355

Issued by the authority of the Minister for Finance and Administration

Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990

Parliamentary Entitlements Amendment Regulations 2001 (No. 1)

Subsection 4(1) of the Act provides that Members are entitled to the benefits set out in Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Act. Paragraph 5(1)(b) provides that Members are entitled to such additional benefits as are prescribed by the regulations. Section 12 of the Act provides that the Governor-General may make regulations for the purposes of paragraph 5(1)(b).

The Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations provide that Members are entitled to additional benefits in the form of personalised letterhead stationery, newsletters for distribution to constituents and such other printed material, as approved by the Minister, for distribution to constituents.

The purpose of the Regulations is:

- (a) to amend the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations:
 - (i) to place a financial limit of \$125,000 p.a. on the amount which may be expended in respect of the personalised stationery, newsletters and other printed material by Members of the House of Representatives; and
 - (ii) to provide a comprehensive statement of the entitlement of Senators to personalised stationery, printing and photocopying;
- (b) to provide for a more satisfactory arrangement to cover the travel and associated costs when a Senator or Member travels overseas to represent the Government or a Minister.

Up until now there has been no formal limit on the value of the benefit for printing of personalised stationery, newsletters and other approved printed material. The Prime Minister, on 27 September 2001, announced the Government's intention to place a financial cap of \$125,000 p.a. in respect of Members of the House of Representatives on this benefit.

The financial cap is to be imposed with effect from 1 January 2002 and apply on a pro rata basis until 30 June 2002. The Act contains two provisions (sections 6 and 14) which set out the formula for calculating a pro rata amount. This formula (based on the number of days remaining in a financial year divided by 365) has been applied to yield \$61,986.00 for the period to 30 June 2002.

Up until now there has not been a satisfactory set of arrangements for when a Senator or Member travels overseas representing the Government or a Minister. The Regulations put such a mechanism in place.

There are long-standing administrative arrangements for Senators relating to their printing entitlements. In his statement of 27 September 2001 the Prime Minister said that the printing entitlements of Senators would remain the same. They have now been formally provided by Regulation.

The Regulations:

- restrict the benefit to Members of the House of Representatives;
- substitute Regulation 3:
 - to impose a financial limit of \$61,986 on the printing entitlement for the period 1 January to 30 June 2002 (Regulation 3(2)); and
 - to impose a financial limit of \$125,000 p.a. on the printing entitlement for each year commencing on or after 1 July 2002 (Regulation 3(3)); and
- insert a new Regulation 3A which sets out the personalised stationery,

printing and photocopying entitlement of Senators of:

- personalised stationery and newsletter mastheads;
- material may be reproduced subject to a limit of 20 reams per month in the case of the President and Deputy President of the Senate, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Shadow Ministers and Shadow Parliamentary Secretaries, the Leader and Deputy Leader of a Minority Party, and Party Whips;
- a limit of 10 reams per month for other Senators; and
- conditions relating to transferability, carrying forward and making claims in advance;
- insert a new Regulation 3A dealing with overseas travel undertaken by a

Senator or Member who, with the approval of the Prime Minister, is

representing a Minister or the Government overseas:

- the Regulation provides for the cost of travel by the Member (fares, accommodation needs);
- subject to the Prime Minister's approval, the cost of travel by a spouse; and
- the cost of official hospitality extended by the Senator or Member while overseas under the same arrangements as would apply for a Minister (these include an advance of \$2,500 and requires expenditure be fully accounted for) with the approval of the Special Minister of State.

The Regulations commence on gazettal.