

# **STATES OF JERSEY**



## **CODE OF PRACTICE ON PUBLIC ACCESS TO OFFICIAL INFORMATION: REGISTER OF REPORTS (P.196/2003) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 13th January 2004  
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

The Privileges and Procedures Committee has given careful consideration to the proposition of Deputy P.N. Troy on “Code of Practice to Official Information: Register of Reports” (P.196/2003).

The Committee’s own terms of reference give it responsibility for this issue as agreed by the States on 26th March 2003 –

*“to bring forward for the approval of the States proposals for the provision of information to the public about the work of the States Assembly, and, following the introduction of a ministerial system, about the work of the Council of Ministers, Scrutiny Committees, and the Public Accounts Committee, and to keep these public information services under review”.*

In order to progress this part of its terms of reference, a joint Working Party was set up by the Privileges and Procedures Committee and the Legislation Committee. This Working Party is currently working towards a draft Freedom of Information Law which will cover the register of reports, considering best practice elsewhere and model legislation. Its work will also be informed by work of the Audit Commission under the chairmanship of Advocate C.G.P. Lakeman, as he then was.

The Committee notes the objectives of Deputy P.N. Troy of St. Brelade and is of the view that the compilation of such a register would contribute towards openness. Indeed, the existence of such a list might be helpful to the scrutiny process. The Committee is not clear what the Deputy means by ‘report’ and would wish to see a clearer definition to establish the type of report that would be included. The Committee proposes that it will investigate the matter further in full co-operation with the Deputy and other Members.

The Committee notes the intention that it should administer the compilation of the list, and considers that it would be sufficient to place the list on the States Assembly Website, and which could be printed on request by Members of the States Greffe. While the mechanism for doing this has not been investigated in depth, using I.T., a shared area could be set up and updated by each department as new reports were completed, and the States Greffe could then periodically upload these to the website for public access.

The Committee commends P.196/2003 as a useful contribution to the on-going work of the Committee. However, the Committee urges caution and the need to avoid over-simplification. The Committee believes it would be preferable for Deputy Troy to withdraw the proposition so that the issue can be considered within the overall context of a Freedom of Information Law and included in a measured and orderly way. The Committee undertakes to invite Deputy Troy to participate in discussions with the Working Party but it reminds Members that responsibility for the issue of access to information rests with the Privileges and Procedures Committee.