

to assist with the processing of requests. The necessary extensive legal advice is provided by legal advisors from the Department of Justice.

13. Requests continue to be more complex and time-consuming than initially anticipated. The growing number of foreign policy-related requests has necessitated in many cases the review of large volumes of documents and the preparation of detailed recommendations, involving increased consultation with other federal agencies as well as foreign and provincial governments. This has placed a heavy burden on the program divisions concerned in addition to their normal work.

FORMAL/INFORMAL INTERFACE

14. Since the Act is intended to complement, rather than replace, existing procedures for access to government information, informal requests can be addressed to the ATIP Office, as well as to bureaux within the Department, the Minister's Office, the Media Relations Office or the Library.

15. Only formal requests are processed by the ATIP Office but the departmental Co-ordinator for Access to Information and Privacy must devote considerable time to consultation with the program bureaux concerned to ensure that their replies to informal enquiries are consistent with the requirements of the Act.