



GRANTS PROCESS TO AGAIN BE PUBLICLY QUESTIONED BY JCPAA

Public hearing 14 March 2012 in Canberra

A report by the Commonwealth Auditor-General into the administration of grant reporting obligations by Australian Government agencies found there were significant shortcomings in the briefing practices adopted by agencies in the grant selection process.

The report notes that while the issuing of the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines in July 2009 was a significant advance in public administration, it is time to review aspects of these guidelines, particularly in light of the audit's findings. The ANAO's recommendations focus on enhancing the quality of advice provided to Ministers and compliance with associated reporting obligations.

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit decided to review this report following its recent inquiry into an ANAO audit report that expressed concerns over grants approved under the Infrastructure Employment Projects stream of the Jobs Fund.

Committee Chair Mr Robert Oakeshott MP reiterated the JCPAA's continued emphasis on the importance of agencies providing advice on the merits of proposed grants before any funding decisions are taken.

"Grants expenditure runs into the billions each year. Monies provided through grants require full transparency, accountability, and probity. We need to make sure that the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines are clear, and that agencies have sufficient support to ensure decisions can stand up to full public scrutiny" said Mr Oakeshott. "Where Ministers and politicians change recommendations on grants, it needs to be transparent and with explicit reasoning why."

The Department of Finance and Deregulation and the Australian National Audit Office will appear before the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit to discuss the findings of ANAO Audit Report No. 21 2011-12 *Administration of Grant Reporting Obligations*.

The hearing will be held on **Wednesday 14 March**, from **11:00 – 11:45** in **Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House Canberra**.

Live Broadcast: http://www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament

An electronic copy of the program can be found at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jcpaa/auditgen11_11/hearings.htm

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, Rob Oakeshott MP, on telephone (02) 6584 2911

For more information: for information about the hearing, please contact the Committee Secretariat on telephone (02) 6277 4615, e-mail jcpaa@aph.gov.au, or visit the Committee website <http://www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa>