

Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit's (JCPAA) inquiry into public service governance was based on the Auditor-General's report No. 29 (2015–16) *Implementing the Deregulation Agenda: Cutting Red Tape (Across Entities)*.
- 1.2 The Committee concurred with Australian National Audit Office's (ANAO) findings that the Deregulation Agenda has overall been implemented well by the Australian Public Service, with strong leadership by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C).
- 1.3 The focus of the Committee's inquiry into the government's Deregulation Agenda was on the governance of the agenda: how it was implemented and how it was reviewed. The Committee was pleased to see that the agenda was implemented according to good public governance principles.
- 1.4 These principles included consultation with external stakeholders, clear reporting requirements, the creation of identified units with responsibility, information sharing and responsiveness to reviews.
- 1.5 There is some evidence that there is likely to have been a significant net economic benefit from the Deregulation Agenda, however there has not yet been independent verification of the outcomes. Having the extent of this benefit independently quantified would support future regulatory decision-making, with likely positive public administration outcomes. A future, more comprehensive, post-implementation review process would further add to the evidence base for such programs.
- 1.6 While the government has established other review mechanisms for regulatory changes, the Committee notes that those processes will not necessarily include evaluations of the government's Deregulation Agenda.
- 1.7 The Committee therefore strongly supports the single ANAO recommendation: that PM&C take steps to implement the Australian

Government's December 2013 decision that the economic impacts of the Deregulation Agenda be assessed within three years.

1.8 In its response to the ANAO report, PM&C advised that 'implementation of this decision is currently being discussed with the Government'.¹

1.9 PM&C reiterated the information in its submission to this inquiry and said 'We hope to be able to provide the Committee with an update on these discussions in the first half of 2017'.²

1.10 Recommendation 1: That the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet report back to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit on progress implementing the Australian Government's December 2013 decision to review the economic impacts of the Deregulation Agenda.

1 ANAO Audit Report No. 29 (2015-16), p. 11.

2 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Submission 1, p. [1].