



COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SECTOR UNION

8 December 2025

Finance and Public Administration Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Amendment (Ban Unethical Contractors) Bill 2025

As the primary union representing employees in the Australian Public Service (APS), the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) is committed to providing a strong voice for our members in key public policy and political debates.

The CPSU welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry into the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Amendment (Ban Unethical Contractors) Bill 2025. We support the Bill and believe a broad debarment and suspension regime will act as a “stick” to dissuade corporations from engaging in unethical behaviour. It is essential to rebuilding public confidence in government contracting by bolstering integrity and improving transparency.

The CPSU previously advocated for the establishment of a federal debarment regime in 2023, drawing on the experience of the WA Government.¹ We note that since that submission, the NSW Government also announced it will establish its own debarment regime in 2024, following a recommendation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption.²

The “ban” on new PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) contracts highlights why a debarment regime is needed.³ The CPSU was critical of the lifting of the formal ban on Commonwealth agencies contracting PwC by the Department of Finance in 2025 which only lasted a single year.⁴ While there is discretion under the Commonwealth Procurement Rules to exclude companies,⁵ the

¹ Community and Public Sector Union, Submission to Inquiry into the Ethics and Professional Accountability: Structural Challenges in the Audit, Assurance and Consultancy Industry, Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services. September 2023

² NSW Government. Dodgy Suppliers to Be Banned from NSW Government Contracts. September 2024, <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/dodgy-suppliers-to-be-banned-from-nsw-government-contracts>.

³ “PwC Shut out of Future Federal Contracts.” Australian Financial Review, 25 May 2023, <https://www.afr.com/companies/professional-services/pwc-actively-banned-from-government-contracts-20230525-p5dbde>

⁴ Union Calls on Katy Gallagher to “override” PwC Decision.

https://www.cpsu.org.au/CPSU/Content/News/Union_calls_Katy_Gallagher_override_PwC_decision.aspx. Accessed 3 Nov. 2025.

⁵ “Foreign Bribery”, Senate Standing Committees on Economics, 2018,

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Economics/Foreignbribery45th/Report/c08. Accessed 17 Apr. 2023.



PwC saga highlights the need for a more systemic approach rather than relying on a more discretionary ad hoc approach.

The proposed debarment period of up to 5 years under this Bill is modest and less than prohibitions of up to 10 years in Canada,⁶ and sanctions by the World Bank that can be more than 10 years.⁷ The CPSU also notes the Queensland Government until recently had an indefinite ban on contracting IBM that lasted 12 years.⁸

The CPSU is happy to provide further information regarding any of the matters raised in this submission and supplementary information on other relevant issues.

Sincerely,

Melissa Donnelly
National Secretary
CPSU-PSU Group

⁶ Canada, Public Services and Procurement. Ineligibility and Suspension Policy. 1 May 2024, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-services-procurement/services/standards-oversight/supplier-integrity-compliance/policy-directives/ineligibility-suspension-policy.html>.

⁷ "World Bank Listing of Ineligible Firms and Individuals." *World Bank*, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/procurement/debarred-firms>. Accessed 3 Nov. 2025.

⁸ "Qld Lifts 12-Year Ban on IBM after \$1.25bn Payroll Failure." *iNews*, <https://www.itnews.com.au/news/qld-lifts-12-year-ban-on-ibm-after-125bn-payroll-failure-620939>. Accessed 3 Nov. 2025.