



New review of Defence procurement and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Approvals

Acquisition and evaluation of Defence major equipment and regulation of Great Barrier Reef permits and approvals will be the focus of new inquiries by Parliament's Public Accounts Committee.

The new inquiries have been launched as part of the Committee's role in examining Australian National Audit Office reports. Committee Chair, the Hon Ian Macfarlane MP, said that the Committee had an important role in holding Commonwealth agencies to account.

"The Committee's review of public expenditure remains an important mechanism to improve transparency, accountability and, ultimately, public outcomes", Mr Macfarlane said.

"In this case, the review of another large Defence acquisition project, in parallel with the forthcoming Committee review of the Defence Major Projects Report, will further strengthen accountability of a Commonwealth department with a budget of \$32 billion in 2015-16".

The Committee is also inquiring into the regulation of permits and approvals by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. The ANAO concluded that shortcomings in the authority's regulatory processes and practices have undermined the effectiveness of the permitting system as a means of managing risks to the marine park.

Interested persons and organisations are invited to make submissions to the Committee's inquiries, addressing the terms of reference. Further information about the Committee's inquiries, including details on how to lodge a submission, are available on the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa.

Public hearings will be held during February and March 2016.

Details of the ANAO reports are:

- No. 52 of 2014-15, *Australian Defence Force's Medium and Heavy Vehicle Fleet Replacement (Land 121 Phase 3B)*
- No. 3 of 2015-16, *Regulation of Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Permits and Approvals*
- No. 9 of 2015-16, *Test and Evaluation of Major Defence Equipment Acquisitions.*

For media comment: please contact Committee Chair, Hon Ian Macfarlane MP, on 6277 4988 or 07 4632 4144

For information about the inquiry: please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4615, email jcpaa@aph.gov.au, or visit the Committee website <http://www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa>