



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee

Inquiry into management and assurance of integrity by consulting services

Final report – tabled today.

The committee has tabled its third, and final report, for its inquiry into management and assurance of integrity by consulting services. The committee published 61 submissions and held 10 public hearings.

The committee has already tabled two interim reports: *PwC: A Calculated Breach of Trust* (June 2023) and *PwC: The Cover-up Worsens the Crime* (March 2024).

In its final report, the committee has taken a wider view to examine the management and assurance of integrity by consultancy services generally, with a focus on the Big 4. The committee has considered the Australian Government procurement framework, the reliance on consultants by the APS, contract management by the Australian Public Service (APS), the culture in the Big 4 firms and options to regulate the consulting industry.

The committee has made 12 recommendations. The committee's recommendations, taken together, are designed to support the achievement of four objectives:

- To **enhance APS capability** to perform its core functions for the Australian people and the government, and its capability to effectively procure consultancy services and manage contracts.
- To **increase transparency** so that the nature, scope, and scale of consultancy services provided across the APS is collected centrally and made available.
- To establish **appropriate regulation and integrity assurance** of the consulting services industry.
- To **provide oversight** by the Australian Parliament of the significant expenditure on consultancy and services contracts.

The Chair, Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, said: "The evidence provided to the committee in this inquiry has convinced the committee that decisive action is required. I hope that the Australian Government will support the committee's recommendations, and implement the changes that are needed, to ensure that consultants are used appropriately by the APS, integrity is maintained, and value for money is achieved. These changes will benefit the APS, and by extension, the Australian community."

"I thank those who have given evidence to the committee and my colleagues for the collegiate manner in which this important inquiry has been conducted."

DATE REFERRED

9 March 2023

REPORTING DATE

12 June 2024

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck (Chair)

Senator Louise Pratt (Deputy Chair)

Senator the Hon James McGrath

Senator Barbara Pocock

Senator Dave Sharma

Senator Deborah O'Neill (substituted for Senator Jana Stewart)

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