



Committee reports on first stage of public sector reform

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) will tomorrow release its inquiry report on the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) rules development. The report is a continuation of the Committee's ongoing oversight of the Public Management Reform Agenda (PMRA) and builds on the Committee's earlier inquiry into the PGPA Bill 2013.

"The Committee believes that stage one of the reform agenda, comprising the PGPA Act and the implementation of the first set of PGPA rules, establishes a solid foundation for efficiencies and the framework for cultural change in Commonwealth resource management into the future," Committee Chair, Dr Andrew Southcott MP said.

The Committee has made a number of recommendations in response to specific issues raised by stakeholders concerning the PGPA rules development, including:

- a call for greater clarity and consistency across the PGPA guidance materials
- adding to the PMRA guiding principles to emphasise the role of the Parliament in the finance law and better enable parliamentary scrutiny of the spending of public money
- explicitly placing an obligation on all individual officials to consider proper use and management of public resources before approving commitments of relevant money
- providing discussion in guidance materials of the risks involved in officials approving aggregate expenditure proposals
- ensuring the Australian National Audit Office has the power, under the new arrangements, to audit the full planning, performance and accountability framework
- addressing potential confusion from dual coverage with the *Public Service Act 1999*
- emphasising, in the guidance materials, that chairs of Commonwealth bodies are able to attend audit committee meetings as observers
- Department of Finance continuing to consult with stakeholders throughout the development of the post-July 2014 rules and the broader PMRA
- Department of Finance outlining and communicating dates for the development and consultation of all future rules and guidance materials

"The Committee has a keen interest in the ongoing process of the PMRA and the development of the PGPA rules beyond 1 July 2014 and intends to conduct inquiries into stages two and three of the reform agenda. Key priority areas for stages two and three include a new risk framework, better facilitation of 'joined-up' government and partnership arrangements, and an improved performance framework," Dr Southcott said.

Copies of the report will be released on the Committee's website at: www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa

For media comment: please contact Committee Chair, Dr Andrew Southcott MP (Marion Themeliotis 0413747351)

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