



Australian Government
Department of Education

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Public Consultancy and Services Contract Bill 2025

Submission from the Department of Education to
the Senate Standing Committees on Finance and
Public Administration



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Parliamentary Joint Committee on Public Consultancy and Services Contract Bill 2025

Introduction

The Department of Education (the department) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Public Consultancy and Services Contracts Bill 2025 (the Bill).

The department's consultancy contracts

In the 2024-25 financial year, the department entered into 28 consultancy contracts, with only one within the scope of the Bill. This contract is to undertake critical work to inform future policy advice and reforms to allow the Australian Government to understand the reasonable costs of quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) service delivery.

In the 2023-24 financial year, the department entered into 50 consultancy contracts, only two of which are within scope of the Bill. These contracts were to provide Independent Project Assurance Services for the Education Funding System Project, and a Combined Pass Business Case (CPBC) to provide Government options for a National Skills Passport.

Established and effective internal controls

The department has a comprehensive and well-established internal control framework governing consultancy procurements. All consultancy engagements—regardless of financial value—require approval from a Deputy Secretary (SES Band 3) prior to approaching the market. This high-level oversight ensures that each engagement aligns with strategic priorities, delivers value for money, and complies with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs).

In addition to approval requirements, consultancy contracts must meet the correct classification criteria to ensure they are appropriately defined and justified as consultancy services. This helps maintain consistency and transparency in procurement reporting and decision-making.

The department also mandates the use of the Management Advisory Services (MAS) Panel for all consultancy procurements unless the required services are demonstrably out of scope of the panel's offerings. This requirement streamlines procurement processes, promotes competition among pre-qualified suppliers, and supports efficient and compliant sourcing.

Any consultancy contract with an estimated value of \$2 million and above is subject to internal legal review to ensure contractual soundness and mitigate risk. These layered controls provide a robust mechanism for accountability and compliance and are intended to reduce the likelihood of procedural or financial missteps.

Summary

The department's existing governance framework for consultancy procurements is both comprehensive and effective, ensuring strategic alignment, value for money, and compliance with procurement rules and contains rigorous approval processes and legal oversight for high-value contracts.