



SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE ABBOTT GOVERNMENT'S COMMISSION OF AUDIT

Mr Tony Shepherd AO
Chair
National Commission of Audit

Dear Mr Shepherd

Public Hearing 15 January 2014

I refer to discussions between the Committee Secretary and Mr John Grant of the National Commission of Audit's secretariat in relation to the Committee holding a public hearing.

The Committee has considered the Commission's request to postpone the hearing until the first week of February. The Committee is of the view that it is important for the Commission to appear before it prior to the Commission delivering its first report, which the Committee understands is due at the end of January. Therefore, the Committee has decided to proceed with a public hearing on Wednesday 15 January 2014 at 2.00pm. The public hearing will take place in Senate Committee Room 2S3, Parliament House, Canberra.

The Committee understands that that the following people will be available to appear before the Committee on Wednesday:

- Mr Tony Shepherd AO, Chair;
- Mr Peter Crone, Head of Secretariat; and
- Mr John Grant, First Assistant Secretary NCOA Secretariat.

While the Committee appreciates these witnesses being available, the Committee has decided it is important that all the Commissioners and the Departmental officials listed below also appear at the hearing. The Committee therefore requests that the following people, in addition to those listed above, attend to give evidence:

- Dr Peter Boxall AO;
- Mr Tony Cole AO;
- Mr Robert Fisher AM;
- The Hon Amanda Vanstone;
- Mr Stephen Clively (Finance First Assistant Secretary seconded to secretariat); and
- Treasury senior executives seconded to secretariat.

The committee will also be requesting the following officials from the Department of Finance appear at the hearing:

- Ms Teena Blewitt (First Assistant Secretary, Budget Policy Coordination Division);
- Ms Amanda Lee (Assistant Secretary of Budget Coordination Branch).

The Committee intends to hear from the members of the Commission for approximately two hours (from 2pm to 4pm), and then from the Head of the Secretariat and Departmental officials (from 4pm to 6pm).

Please confirm availability of witnesses by midday on Tuesday 14 January 2014 and advise the names of the senior executive officers seconded from Treasury to the secretariat.

Yours sincerely

Senator Richard Di Natale

Chair



Australian Government
National Commission of Audit

14 January 2014

Senator Richard Di Natale
Chair
Senate Select Committee - Inquiry into the
Abbott Government's Commission of Audit
PO Box 6100
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600

Dear Senator Di Natale

I am writing to advise you of the National Commission of Audit attendees at the hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Wednesday, 15 January 2014.

I am pleased to inform you that all Commission members will be able to attend the hearing. For your records, in addition to myself, the Members are the Hon Amanda Vanstone, Mr Robert Fisher AM, Dr Peter Boxall AO and Mr Tony Cole AO. Each has made themselves available for the hearing, even though some had previous arrangements. This reflects the willingness of the Commission to work constructively with the Committee.

In addition, Mr Peter Crone, Head of the Secretariat, and Mr John Grant, First Assistant Secretary, will support the Commission at the hearing.

I note that the program for the Hearing, provided by the Committee Secretary, Ms Lyn Beverley, today has the Commission and its Secretariat appearing separately. Given that the Secretariat works at the direction of the Commission, I suggest that Mr Crone and Mr Grant appear jointly with Commissioners.

Again, I will look forward to assisting you in your deliberations on Wednesday.

Yours sincerely

A.F. (Tony) Tony Shepherd
Chair



Australian Government
National Commission of Audit

14 January 2014

Senator Richard Di Natale
Chair
Senate Select Committee - Inquiry into the
Abbott Government's Commission of Audit
PO Box 6100
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600

Dear Senator Di Natale

Thank you for your letter, received by email on 13 January 2014, relating to the public hearing of the Committee's *Inquiry into the Abbott Government's Commission of Audit*.

You have requested the attendance of the full Commission of Audit, together with the Head of the Secretariat and the Finance and Treasury executives seconded to the secretariat.

The Commission appreciates the Senate Committee's interest in its work and we are, of course, willing to work constructively with you.

As you know, the first phase of the Commission's report is scheduled to be delivered to the Prime Minister, Treasurer and Minister for Finance on 31 January 2014. You will therefore appreciate that the Commission, and particularly its secretariat, is experiencing a peak workload at this point of time.

Your letter also acknowledges communications between the National Commission of Audit Secretariat and your own Committee Secretariat about the timing of the hearing and our request to postpone attendance until February. That remains our position.

As also discussed between our Secretariats, account should be taken of the fact that Commissioners are not working on the Audit on a full time basis with many also having their own day-jobs. This, along with the fact that no Commissioners reside in Canberra and the relatively short notice period provided, will make it difficult to guarantee that all Commissioners will be available to attend.

While my preference would be to defer attendance until February, I am willing to appear before the Committee this week. I will also endeavour to ensure that other Commissioners who are able to be in Canberra in time for the hearing also attend. Additionally, Mr Crone and Mr Grant from the Secretariat will support me at the hearing.

The attendance of additional members of the Secretariat, in my view, would be an unreasonable disruption of the Commission's work at this critical time. As such, I do not propose that other executives of the Secretariat participate in the hearing.

I will look forward to assisting you in your deliberations on Wednesday.

Yours sincerely

A.F. (Tony) Shepherd AO
Chair