



Australian Government

Department of Finance

EXECUTIVE MINUTE

on

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

REPORT No. 488

Inquiry into Commonwealth Financial Statements 2019-20

General comments

On 31 March 2022 the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (the Committee) tabled Report 488 on its Inquiry into Commonwealth Financial Statements 2019-20. The Committee's inquiry was based on the Auditor-General's audit *Report No.25 (2020-21) Audits of the Financial Statements of Australian Government Entities for the Period Ended 30 June 2020 and Report No. 40 (2020-21) Interim Report on Key Financial Controls of Major Entities*.

Report 488 made two recommendations to the Department of Finance (Finance), one of which falls within the joint responsibility of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Parliamentary Services.

The Finance responses to these recommendations are detailed in this minute.

Recommendation Four:

The Committee recommends that the Department of Finance, as part of the transparency.gov.au project, develop and publish guidance material for users of the project which explains what the included ratios measure, which ratios are important, and what particular ratio results signify.

Response:

Agreed. Finance has updated the guidance material published on the Finance website to explain what the included ratios measure, which ratios are important, and what particular ratio results signify.

Recommendation Five:

The Committee recommends that the Department of Finance, with advice from the Department of Parliamentary Services, provide an update to the Committee within six months of this report's tabling date that details:

- *A progress report detailing the development and implementation of the Online Tabled Documents Projects, including proposed roll-out dates; and*
- *A timeline of the establishment of a new tabling date for Commonwealth entities, including details such as proposed legislative amendments and an anticipated date for introduction to Parliament.*

Response:

Noted. The Online Tabled Documents Project (the Project) is being undertaken by the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) in consultation with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

During the 2019-20 Inquiry, the then Committee sought clarification of this matter. The response provided by Finance outlined that the DPS is responsible for the Project and that matters relating to implementation and timing are more appropriately directed to them.

Finance has advised the DPS that the Committee has sought a progress report detailing the development and implementation of the Project, including implementation dates. This will be provided to the Committee by the DPS.

Amendments to the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) to enact the proposed change of date for the tabling of annual reports in the Parliament requires consideration by the Government. This will be undertaken following the completion of the Project by DPS. A further update on this recommendation will be provided to the Committee at this time.

Signed by

Jenny Wilkinson
Secretary