

Introduction

- 1.1 One of the statutory duties of the Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) is to examine all reports of the Auditor-General. In doing this, the JCPAA considers the significance of the program or issues raised in the audit reports; the significance of the findings; the arguments advanced by the audited agencies; and the public interest of the report. The Committee then reports the results of its deliberations to both Houses of Parliament.
- 1.2 Upon consideration of the twenty-two audit reports presented to the Parliament by the Auditor-General during the fourth quarter of 2000–2001, the JCPAA selected four reports for further scrutiny at public hearings. The public hearings were conducted in Canberra on Tuesday, 30 April 2002.
- 1.3 The reports selected were:
 - Audit Report No. 33, 2000-2001, *Australian Defence Force Reserves* Department of Defence; **(Chapter 2)**
 - Audit Report No. 34, 2000-2001, *Assessment of New Claims for the Age Pension by Centrelink*, Centrelink; **(Chapter 3)**
 - Audit Report No. 35, 2000-2001, *Family and Community Services' Oversight of Centrelink's Assessment of New Claims for the Age Pension*, Department of Family and Community Services; **(Chapter 3)** and

- Audit Report No.43, 2000-2001, *Performance Information for Commonwealth Financial Assistance under the Natural Heritage Trust*, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Department of the Environment and Heritage. **(Chapter 4)**

The Report

- 1.4 This report of the JCPAA's examination draws attention to the main issues raised at the public hearings. Where appropriate, the Committee has commented on unresolved or contentious issues and made recommendations.
- 1.5 A copy of this report is available on the JCPAA website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jpaa/reports.htm>