



JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

Review of Auditor-General's Reports

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 4 July 2011

Chair: Robert Oakeshott MP
Deputy Chair: Yvette D'Ath MP

Where's the paper trail? Infrastructure programs under scrutiny

In a report tabled today, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit has expressed concern at the lack of a clear paper trail for major infrastructure decisions in Australia.

In its review of the Auditor-General's audit of Infrastructure Australia's administrative processes (Audit Report No. 02 2010-11), the Committee learnt that a lack of documentation of key decisions made it difficult to determine why and how decisions had been made. In the Committee's opinion this inhibits the transparency of the process and detracts from the quality of advice provided to the relevant Minister. The Committee has recommended that, in future, Infrastructure Australia provide clear and consistent advice on the level of funding and necessary funding conditions that it recommends for priority infrastructure projects.

Similarly, the link between lack of documentation and transparency were evident in the administration of the Strategic Projects Component of the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program (Audit Report No. 3 2010-11). In this case, the Committee registered its strong dissatisfaction with the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government's (DRARDLG) failure to adhere to basic grants administration processes particularly in light of the lessons learnt from previous Parliamentary and ANAO scrutiny. The Committee has warned the Department that it expects to see concrete evidence of improved performance in the future.

Committee Chair Rob Oakeshott said, "Considering the scale of Australia's infrastructure development, the Public Accounts and Audit Committee wants to ensure that the decisions being made are transparent and open and that the Parliament and the public can be sure that due process has been followed."

The relevant Ministers are required to respond to any JCPAA recommendations within the next six months.

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All Auditor-General's reports can be found on the ANAO website at <http://www.anao.gov.au>

For more information, contact the inquiry secretary on telephone (02) 6277 4615 or for a copy of the latest report visit the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jcpaa/reports.htm>