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INTRODUCTION

What this report is about

1.1 This report contains advice to the Parliament on the review by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) of the 20 audit reports presented by the Auditor-General between 30 October 1997 and 31 December 1997.

1.2 The main feature of the JCPAA's review was the conduct of public hearings on 29 April 1998 at which evidence was taken in relation to two audit reports:

- *Audit Report No. 16, 1997-98, Equity in Employment in the Australian Public Service; and*
- *Audit Report No. 24, 1997-98, Matters relevant to a Contract with South Pacific Cruise Lines Ltd.*

Structure of the report

1.3 This report highlights the main issues discussed at the public hearing and, where appropriate, provides comment on unresolved or contentious issues.

1.4 Chapter 2 of the report deals with the evidence taken in relation to Audit Report No. 16, 1997-98, on equity in employment in the Australian Public Service (APS).

1.5 Chapter 3 of the report summarises the evidence taken on Audit Report No. 24, 1997-98, on matters relevant to a contract with South Pacific Cruise Lines Ltd (SPCL).

1.6 The report refers to, and should be read in conjunction with, the transcript of evidence taken at the public hearings on 29 April 1998. The transcript is reproduced at Appendix VI.