



**Review of Auditor-General's reports tabled between September 2008 and  
January 2009**

**Main Committee**

16 November 2009

Sharon Grierson MP

**Ms Grierson:** (Newcastle) (9:10 PM) — On behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, I present the committee's report. In doing so, I point out to the House that, as prescribed by its act, the committee examines all reports of the Auditor-General and reports the results of the committee's deliberations to the parliament.

This report details the findings of the committee's examination of five performance audits tabled in 2008 and 2009. These five reports were selected for further scrutiny from the 15 audit reports presented to the parliament between 23 September 2008 and 28 January 2009. As usual, these reports cover a range of agencies and highlight a number of areas of concern. The two key themes the committee encountered were the need to adequately and effectively report progress towards goals and the need to maintain adequate and up-to-date customer records.

The committee reviewed the business partnership agreement between the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Centrelink. While we were pleased to find that interagency dispute resolution had been improved, we were disappointed to find that the agencies have not managed to fully implement an ANAO recommendation from 2004 to ensure that the business partnership agreement is kept up to date. Accordingly, we recommended that the agencies fully implement the recommendation before the commencement of the next business partnership arrangement in 2010.

As a result of the investigation into Centrelink's tip-off management system, we found that Centrelink was acting quickly to implement all ANAO recommendations. Through the hearing process, we found that Centrelink was still retaining data that was based on unsubstantiated claims against a number of customers. The retention of this information has the potential to prejudice further claims made against a customer. We therefore recommended that Centrelink ensure that such information is deleted from the tip-off recording system as soon as it is identified.

In reviewing the management of disability employment services by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and

the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, we found the agencies had effectively planned, managed and implemented their policy initiatives. Additionally, we were satisfied with their implementation of the ANAO's recommendations. However, we found that the agencies were unable to report effectively on progress towards achieving the objective of enhancing the quality of life of people with a disability. Accordingly, we recommended that the agencies monitor and report on progress towards achieving this important goal.

We also examined the Australian Sports Commission's management of the Active After-school Communities program. This program provides support to service providers who deliver after-school physical activity sessions for primary school children. The program has proven to be very popular with students and it has been well implemented, considering the rapidity of its rollout. We were concerned at the ANAO finding that some adults working on the program had not completed the appropriate security checks for working with children but found in our hearing that these had now been completed and were mandatory and that waivers were no longer available. We note that it is difficult to report on the success of the program outside of anecdotal evidence, but we believe the development of motor skills is a key factor in developing an interest in physical activity. We recommended that the Australian Sports Commission determine ways to measure the development of motor skills and that they seek to have funding for the measurement of motor skills development included in their next funding bid.

Finally, we looked at the administration of Job Network outcome payments. We were pleased to see the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations addressing the issues noted in the audit report. However, we remain concerned that it is difficult to determine the contribution outcome payments make to Job Network expenditure, and we recommend that the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations provide disaggregated financial data on estimated and actual expenditure on outcome payments.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable work of the Auditor-General and the staff at the Australian National Audit Office. I would like to thank the committee secretary, Russell Chafer, and research officers Mr Shane Armstrong, Mr Ian McDonald, Dr Narelle McGlusky and Ms Natalya Wells.