



SHARON GRIERSON TO CHAIR PARLIAMENT'S WATCHDOG COMMITTEE

Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson was today elected Chair of Parliament's powerful Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA).

The JCPAA today met for the first time since the 2007 election, electing Ms Grierson Chair, and Member for Kooyong, Petro Georgiou, Deputy Chair.

The JCPAA acts as Parliament's financial watchdog, and has a unique role in helping to ensure the efficient and effective expenditure of Commonwealth funds.

"As a statutory committee governed by its own legislation, the JCPAA is able to independently inquire into the spending and performance of Commonwealth departments and agencies," Ms Grierson said. "In this way, the JCPAA plays a key role in upholding public accountability and integrity."

"The Committee today agreed on a significant work schedule, including monitoring the Defence Department's largest 30 procurement projects through a report to be published by the Auditor-General."

"We have resolved to continue bi-annual public hearings with the Taxation Commissioner, and will be initiating ongoing dialogue with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary, the Public Service Commissioner and the Auditor-General about ways to promote ongoing improvement in public service performance."

"These initiatives are in addition to our ongoing work of reviewing the Auditor-General's reports into program administration across all portfolios."

"We have an ambitious program of work, and are determined to use our watchdog role to ensure good public administration, accountability and value for money for Australian taxpayers."

"I would like to thank the JCPAA's previous chair, Phil Baressi, for his cooperative and bipartisan leadership - I look forward to continuing in the best tradition of the public accounts committee of this Parliament."

Next week, the JCPAA will meet with the Auditor-General to consider the Australian National Audit Office's funding level and ongoing program of inquiries.

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Background & Membership overleaf:

Background:

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit is one of the joint committees in the Commonwealth Parliament, and is established by the Public Accounts and Audit Committee Act 1951. The JCPAA exists to hold Commonwealth agencies to account for the lawfulness, efficiency and effectiveness with which they use public monies.

The JCPAA is empowered to:

- examine and report on anything affecting the income and expenditure of an Australian Government agency;
- review all reports of the Commonwealth Auditor-General on behalf of the Parliament;
- inquire into any matter referred to it by a Minister or either house of Parliament;
- approve nominations for the positions of Commonwealth Auditor-General and independent Auditor;
- review the annual budget allocation of the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO);
- advise the ANAO of the annual audit priorities of the Parliament; and
- approve the annual reporting requirements of Commonwealth agencies.

JCPAA Members:

- Ms Sharon Grierson MP, Chair (Member for Newcastle, NSW)
- Mr Petro Georgiou MP, Deputy Chair (Member for Kooyong, Vic)
- The Hon Bob Baldwin MP (Member for Paterson, NSW)
- The Hon Arch Bevis MP (Member for Brisbane, QLD)
- Senator Mark Bishop (Senator for Western Australia)
- Mr David Bradbury MP (Member for Lindsay, NSW)
- Mr Mark Butler MP (Member for Port Adelaide, SA)
- Senator Grant Chapman (Senator for South Australia)
- Senator John Hogg (Senator for Queensland)
- Ms Catherine King MP (Member for Ballarat, VIC)
- Senator Kate Lundy (Senator for the Australian Capital Territory)
- Mr Scott Morrison MP (Member for Cook, NSW)
- Senator Andrew Murray (Senator for Western Australia)
- Mr Shayne Neumann MP (Member for Blair, QLD)
- Mr Stuart Robert MP (Member for Fadden, QLD)
- Senator John Watson (Senator for Tasmania)