LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

REPORT NUMBER 22

REVIEW OF AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT NO 7, 1996 - ANNUAL MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1996

The resolution of appointment of the Public Accounts Committee requires that it examine all reports of the Auditor-General which have been laid before the Assembly.

Auditor-General's Report No 7, 1996 was presented to the Assembly on 25 September 1996. The former Audit Act 1989 required that the Auditor-General provide a general report on efficiency audits conducted each year. Although the Act has been repealed with effect from 1 July 1996, the Auditor-General has indicated that this practice will continue.

The 14 efficiency and performance audits published by the Auditor-General in the 1995-96 year were referred to the Public Accounts Committee for review. The committee has reviewed and reported on 12 of these reports. Of the two remaining audit reports, one deals with the collection of court fines and the committee has been waiting for some time for a Ministerial response to its request for comment on the issues dealt with in that report. Such comment is important to the committee's review of audit reports and the delay in this case has prevented the committee from progressing consideration of the court fines report.

The other audit report deals with the management of sheep dip sites. As the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment had been inquiring into matters relating to managing contaminated [and former sheep dip] sites, the Assembly resolved on 25 June 1996 to refer this audit report to that committee for inquiry and report.

The committee notes that the Auditor-General's management report was available to, and was considered by, the Select Committee on Estimates 1996-97 during its consideration of the Appropriation Bill 1996-97.

This is the last Audit Office management report under the Audit Act 1989. From 1 July 1996 the Office has operated principally under the Auditor-General Act 1996. This Act establishes the independence of the Office in several important areas. These include that the Public Accounts Committee have a role in the appointment of the Auditor-General, that the committee may have access to special reports containing sensitive information which is omitted from general audit reports, and that the committee advise the Treasurer of the appropriation for the Auditor-General and provide the Treasurer with a draft budget for that Office.

These are clearly matters which draw the committee much closer to the operations of the Auditor-General.

Bill Wood

Bill Wood
Chair
6 November 1996