Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory
Standing Committee on the Integrity Commission and Statutory Office Holders

Recommendations from the 2024 strategic review of the ACT Auditor-General

Statement pursuant to Standing Order 246A

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on the Integrity Commission and Statutory Office Holders relating to recommendations from the 2024 strategic review of the ACT Auditor-General conducted by Mr Mike Blake AM dated 8 April 2024.

The strategic review made two recommendations for the Auditor-General which involved consideration of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts of the 10th Assembly. The responsibility for the strategic review of the ACT Auditor-General now falls under the resolution of establishment for the Standing Committee on the Integrity Commission and Statutory Office Holders in the 11th Assembly.

Recommendation 1 was that the Auditor-General explore with the former Public Accounts Committee whether the issue of directions under section 35 of the *Auditor-General Act 1996* should be refined to allow Directors-General to brief Ministers on the findings and conclusions in performance audit reports immediately prior to a report being tabled in the Assembly.

The Auditor-General has advised the Integrity Committee that such directions are rarely issued to members of the ACT Public Service, and in any case are usually only issued in the late stages of an audit when a draft report is circulated. A performance audit typically takes many months, during which there are many opportunities for officials to brief a Minister before such a direction would be issued.

The Integrity Committee is of the view that there is no requirement to change the issue of directions under section 35 of the Act and that Ministers may be briefed by officials at many points during an audit before a direction would be issued.

Recommendation 3, referred to the former Public Accounts Committee, concerned processes for handling operational complaints against the Auditor-General.

The Committee notes that there is provision under the Act for the Committee to conduct an inquiry should substantial and serious issues related to the conduct of the Auditor-General be raised. The Committee considers that complaints of an operational nature against the Auditor-General could also be referred to the Committee to determine whether an inquiry would be appropriate or whether referral to the Commissioner for Standards would be warranted.

The Committee therefore considers that, as appropriate measures are already in place, no further action is required in relation to these recommendations of the strategic review of the Auditor-General.

I seek leave to table correspondence from the Auditor-General to the Committee regarding these matters.

[table document]