

41ST PARLIAMENT



Public Accounts Committee

Report 9

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 – 2023

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Presented by Mrs L.M. O'Malley, MLA

September 2023

## *Committee Members*

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Chair	Mrs L.M. O'Malley, MLA Member for Bicton	
Deputy Chair	Ms L. Mettam, MLA Member for Vasse (from 22 February 2023)	Dr D.J. Honey, MLA Member for Cottesloe (until 21 February 2023)
Members	Mr H.T. Jones, MLA Member for Darling Range	
	Ms K.E. Giddens, MLA Member for Bateman (from 21 February 2023)	Ms M.J. Hammat, MLA Member for Mirrabooka (until 21 February 2023)
	Ms L. Dalton, MLA Member for Geraldton (from 21 February 2023)	Ms H.M. Beazley, MLA Member for Victoria Park (until 21 February 2023)

## *Committee Staff*

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Principal Research Officer	Ms Alison Sharpe (until 3 February 2023)
A/Principal Research Officer	Ms Michele Chiasson (from 6 February 2023)
Research Officer	Ms Rachael Wilkins (from 6 February 2023)

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# Public Accounts Committee

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## Annual Report 2022 – 2023

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Report No. 9

Presented by

**Mrs L.M. O'Malley, MLA**

Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on 21 September 2023



## Chair's Foreword

**A**s Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (the Committee), I present for tabling the Committee's Annual report for the 2022–2023 financial year.

Early in the reporting period, our primary focus was finalising our inquiry into the Student Transport Assistance Policy framework as referred to the Committee by the Legislative Assembly. This inquiry received over 200 submissions and had the Committee speaking with more than 40 witnesses at 20 public hearings. We tabled the inquiry report in August 2022, it included 82 findings and 40 recommendations. I would like to thank Member for Roe, Mr Peter Rundle, MLA, who was co-opted to the Committee for the inquiry, for his passion and enthusiasm on the subject matter.

At the beginning of 2023, there were some significant changes to the membership of the Committee. Following the departure of Dr David Honey, Member for Cottesloe, Ms Meredith Hammat, Member for Mirrabooka and Ms Hannah Beazley, Member for Victoria Park, we welcomed Ms Libby Mettam, Member for Vasse, Ms Kim Giddens, Member for Bateman and Ms Lara Dalton, Member for Geraldton. I want to thank the members for Cottesloe, Mirrabooka and Victoria Park for their hard work and camaraderie during their time on the Committee.

In June 2023, we announced our current inquiry into how the State Government's progress towards achieving environmental, social and governance outcomes is assisting to secure international investment. The announcement followed a number of closed hearings and other scoping activities.

Finally, the Committee continued its follow-up of government entity responses to recommendations made by the Auditor General for Western Australia in her audit reports. During the 2022-23 reporting period, we concluded follow-up of 23 Auditor General reports.

I look forward to working with my Committee colleagues as we continue our work for the duration of this Parliament.



MRS L.M. O'MALLEY, MLA  
CHAIR



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# Chapter 1

## Committee Activities

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### Introduction

The report covers the work undertaken by the Public Accounts Committee of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament during the 2022-2023 financial year. During this reporting period the Committee:

- completed a house referred inquiry into the Student Transport Assistance Policy framework
- hosted its annual post-budget briefing for Members of Parliament
- tabled three reports
- held one public hearing and five closed hearings as part of inquiry scoping activities
- held two briefings.

**Table 1.1: Summary of the activities of the Committee, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

Description	Activity
Briefings	2
Deliberative meetings	20
Formal evidence hearings	6
Witnesses appearing	18
Reports tabled	3
Report findings tabled	82
Report recommendations tabled	40

### Portfolios

The five portfolios of the Committee as determined by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament are:

- Premier
- Treasurer
- Finance
- Public Sector Management
- Federal/State Relations

### Public hearings

Pursuant to Assembly Standing Order 264, the Committee has power to send for persons, papers and records. During the period 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023, the Committee conducted one public hearing, taking evidence from two witnesses to assist with its inquiry scoping activities (Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2: Public Hearings of the Committee, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

Date	Witness	Position	Organisation
16 November 2022	Jodi Cant	Director General	Department of Finance
	Kate Ingham	Deputy Director General, Advisory Services	

## Briefings

During the reporting period the Committee held two briefings, both with the Office of the Auditor General of Western Australia (Table 1.3). The purpose of these briefings is to provide an opportunity for information sharing and feedback and to continue the positive working relationship between the Committee and the Auditor General.

**Table 1.3: Briefings provided to the Committees, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

Date	Name	Position	Organisation
26 October 2022	Caroline Spencer	Auditor General	Office of the Auditor General
	Sandra Labuschagne	Deputy Auditor General	
	Carl Huxtable	Assistant Auditor General, Forensic Audit	
	Tim Hughes	Principal Adviser	
22 March 2023	Caroline Spencer	Auditor General	Office of the Auditor General
	Sandra Labuschagne	Deputy Auditor General	
	Grant Robertson	Assistant Auditor General, Financial Audit	
	Tim Hughes	Principal Adviser	

## Conferences

### Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committee's

The 16<sup>th</sup> Biennial Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committee (ACPAC) Conference was hosted by the New Zealand Finance and Expenditure Committee in Wellington, New Zealand on 21-22 July 2022.

Two Committee members and the Principal Research Officer attended the ACPAC Conference virtually and the Committee Chair provided the jurisdictional report for Western Australia.

### Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees

The Committee Chair and the Research Officer virtually attended the Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees (CAPAC) Conference on 30-31 August 2023. This Conference was hosted by the People's Majils (Parliament) of the Maldives.

## Reports Tabled

The Committee tabled three reports during the period 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023:

### **Report No. 6: Bus Fair: The report of the inquiry into the Student Transport Assistance Policy framework**

This report, tabled in August 2022, followed the Committee's inquiry into the Student Transport Assistance Policy framework. The terms of reference for the inquiry were referred to the Committee by the Legislative Assembly in August 2021.

The first half of the report focused on the Committee's examination of the eligibility criteria for transport assistance for rural students attending mainstream schools. With the second half focusing on the logistics of providing student transport assistance, including the determination of bus routes and stops, school bus contracting arrangements and managing student behaviour on buses.

The Committee received over 200 submissions and heard from over 70 people from around the state both in person and virtually. The issues raised throughout the inquiry were complex and in some instances quite emotive.

The report includes 82 findings and 40 recommendations. The recommendations were intended to address stakeholders' concerns, whilst also considering the financial and logistical issues of delivering a school bus service over a state the size of Western Australia. One of the key issues discussed throughout the report was the need for improved communications and consultation between all parties involved and this was reflected in many of the findings and recommendations.

### **Report No. 7: Annual Report 2021-2022**

Tabled in October 2022, this report details the activities of the Public Accounts Committee from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

### **Report No. 8: Budget Briefing 2023-24**

Tabled in May 2023, this report follows the annual briefing on the Western Australian State Budget hosted by the Public Accounts Committee for members of Parliament. The report includes a copy of the PowerPoint presentation provided by the Deputy Treasurer at the briefing.

## Other Activities

### **Follow-up of Auditor General recommendations**

The Committee continued its important work of following-up state government agency responses to recommendations made by the Auditor General for Western Australia in their audit reports. This practice supports the Auditor General, who has no specific power to elicit responses or actions taken to address their recommendations, other than periodically undertaking follow-up or follow-on audits.

During the reporting period, the Committee followed-up 22 state government agencies regarding implementation of the recommendations contained within 14 Auditor General reports. The Committee also concluded its follow-up of 23 Auditor General reports.

**Environment, social and governance outcomes inquiry**

In June 2023, the Committee wrote to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly announcing its inquiry into how the Western Australian Government's progress towards achieving environmental, social and governance (ESG) outcomes is assisting to secure international investment.

The announcement followed months of inquiry scoping work, including a number of closed hearings with key agencies and subject matter experts.

## Chapter 2

### Financial Statement

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The Committee does not have its own formal budget and is funded out of the budget of the Legislative Assembly. Approval for major expenditures is required on a case-by-case basis and is entirely at the discretion of the Speaker.

The Committee's expenditure for the financial year 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023 (in accordance with Standing Order 276) is detailed below:

**Table 2.1: Expenditure items of the Committee, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

Expenditure Item	Amount (\$)
Printing	1,557
Staff/Member Amenities	249
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,806</b>

Notes:

- Figures rounded off to nearest dollar.
- Salaries of committee staff are not included.
- Costs of shared administrative expenses, including lease costs for committee accommodation, not included.



MRS L.M. O'MALLEY, MLA  
CHAIR



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