

41ST PARLIAMENT



Public Accounts Committee

Report 1

ANNUAL REPORT 2020–2021

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Presented by  
Mrs L.M. O'Malley, MLA  
October 2021

*Committee Members – 40th Parliament*

Chair	Dr A.D. Buti, MLA Member for Armadale
Deputy Chair	Mr D.C. Nalder, MLA Member for Bateman
Members	Mr V.A. Catania, MLA Member for North West Central
	Mr S.A. Millman, MLA Member for Mount Lawley
	Mrs L.M. O'Malley, MLA Member for Bicton

*Committee Members – 41st Parliament*

Chair	Mrs L.M. O'Malley, MLA Member for Bicton
Deputy Chair	Dr D.J. Honey, MLA Member for Cottesloe
Members	Mr H.T. Jones, MLA Member for Darling Range
	Ms M.J. Hammat, MLA Member for Mirrabooka
	Ms H.M. Beazley, MLA Member for Victoria Park

*Committee Staff – 40th Parliament*

Principal Research Officer	Dr Alan Charlton, PhD
Research Officer	Dr Sam Hutchinson, PhD

*Committee Staff – 41st Parliament*

Principal Research Officer	Ms Alison Sharpe
Research Officer	Ms Michele Chiasson

Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
4 Harvest Terrace  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Tel: (08) 9222 7494  
Email: [lapac@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:lapac@parliament.wa.gov.au)  
Website: [www.parliament.wa.gov.au/pac](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/pac)

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# Public Accounts Committee

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## Annual Report 2020–2021

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Report No. 1

Presented by

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

Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on 14 October 2021



## Chair's Foreword

**A**s Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (the Committee), I present for tabling the Committee's Annual Report for the 2020–2021 financial year. This report incorporates the final months of the 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, and the first two months of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament.

The Committee of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament was established on 12 May 2021. It initially spent time acquainting itself with the important role of public accounts committees, and putting in place processes and procedures to assist it in undertaking this role. The Committee then commenced following up government agency actions in response to recommendations made by the Auditor General for Western Australia in her audit reports.



MRS L.M. O'MALLEY, MLA  
CHAIR



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# Chapter 1

## Committee Activities

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### Introduction

The 2020–2021 reporting period encompasses two parliamentary sessions. The 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament was prorogued on 7 December 2020, and the Legislative Assembly was dissolved by the Governor on 29 January 2021. The dissolution terminated the Legislative Assembly and its committees. The Public Accounts Committee (the Committee) of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament was established on 12 May 2021.

A summary of the activities of the Committee during the course of the reporting period is in Table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1: Summary of the activities of the Committee, 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021**

Description	Activity
<b>40<sup>th</sup> Parliament</b>	
Deliberative meetings	10
Public hearings	11
Witnesses appearing	23
Reports tabled	4
Report findings tabled	58
Report recommendations tabled	23
<b>41<sup>st</sup> Parliament</b>	
Briefing	1
Deliberative meetings	4

### 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

In practice, the Committee’s remit extends beyond these portfolios. Under Legislative Assembly Standing Order 285, the Committee can:

... inquire into and report to the Assembly on any proposal, matter or thing it considers necessary, connected with the receipt and expenditure of public moneys, including moneys allocated under the annual Appropriation bills and Loan Fund.

The Committee’s functions and powers are set out in Appendix One.

## Public Hearings

Pursuant to Assembly Standing Order 264, the Committee has power to send for persons, papers and records. During the reporting period, the previous Committee conducted 11 public hearings, taking evidence from 23 witnesses as part of its Inquiry into use of State funding by the Western Australian Football Commission (see Appendix Four of the *More than just a game: The use of State funds by the WA Football Commission* report of the Public Accounts Committee of the 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament).

## Briefings

During the reporting period the current Committee held one briefing. The briefing provided the Committee with an opportunity to formally meet the Auditor General and Deputy Auditor General and discuss the role and functions of the Office of the Auditor General and how it interacts with the Committee (Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2: Briefings provided to the Committees, 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021**

Date	Name	Position	Organisation
16 June 2021	Ms Caroline Spencer	Auditor General	Office of the Auditor General for Western Australia
	Ms Sandra Labuschagne	Deputy Auditor General	
	Mr Tim Hughes	Principal Adviser	

## Investigative Travel

The Committee did not undertake any investigative travel during the period 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021.

## Reports Tabled

The previous Committee tabled 4 reports during the period 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021:

- [Report No. 15: Annual Report 2019-20](#)
- [Report No. 16: Review of Auditor General Reports - Selected reports 2015-2018](#)

This was the fifth report in a series presented by the previous Committee to inform Parliament of the actions public sector agencies have taken in response to recommendations made in performance audit reports tabled by the Auditor General. This report continued the Committee’s review of performance audit reports tabled by the Auditor General in 2015–2018. It dealt with 34 reports tabled by the Auditor

General, and stands alongside the five reports tabled in 2019 and 2020 on follow-ups of individual performance audits.

- [Report No. 17: More than just a game: The use of State funds by the WA Football Commission](#)

This report followed an inquiry into how effectively the WA Football Commission (WAFC), in its role as caretaker of football in WA, used State funding to develop football across all levels; whether it was meeting its obligations under the funding agreement with the State; and the effectiveness and transparency of monitoring and reporting functions included in the State's funding agreement with the WAFC.

The inquiry followed a series of stories in *The West Australian* reporting on concern over salaries expenditure in the organisation and unease across the football community with some of the WAFC's activities. The report made 58 findings and 23 recommendations dealing with issues around the behaviour and responses by the WAFC during this inquiry, State funding of football, elite talent and grassroots football development, the composition and election of WAFC Commissioners, and the transparency of the Commission.

- [Report No. 18: Budget Briefing 2020–2021](#)

### **Other Activities**

Since being established in May 2021, the current Committee has focussed on familiarising itself with the role of public accounts committees. The Committee met with the Auditor General, Caroline Spencer, and Deputy Auditor General, Sandra Labuschagne in June. The Committee was briefed on the operations of the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), and discussed how the Committee and the OAG can cooperate to enhance public sector accountability and performance.

The Committee has also begun to follow-up recommendations made by the Auditor General to government agencies. The follow-up of agency responses to the Auditor General's recommendations is common practice among public accounts committees across the Commonwealth. The Committee uses a triaging process, similar to that developed and refined by Western Australian Public Accounts Committees since 2014, to determine the manner and extent to which the Committee will scrutinise each audited agency.



## Chapter 2

### Financial Statement

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#### Committee expenditure

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 2020 – 30 June 2021 (in accordance with Standing Order 276) is detailed below:

**Table 2.1: Expenditure items of the Committee, 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021**

Expenditure Item	Amount (\$)
Advertising	1,372
Printing	911
Staff/Member Amenities	63
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,346</b>

Notes:

- Figures are rounded to the nearest dollar.
- Salaries of committee staff and the costs of shared administrative expenses, including lease costs for committee accommodation, are excluded.



MRS L.M. O'MALLEY, MLA  
CHAIR



# Appendix One

## Committee's functions and powers

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The Public Accounts Committee inquires into and reports to the Legislative Assembly on any proposal, matter or thing it considers necessary, connected with the receipt and expenditure of public moneys, including moneys allocated under the annual Appropriation bills and Loan Fund. Standing Order 286 of the Legislative Assembly states that:

The Committee may -

- (1) Examine the financial affairs and accounts of government agencies of the State which includes any statutory board, commission, authority, committee, or trust established or appointed pursuant to any rule, regulation, by-law, order, order in Council, proclamation, ministerial direction or any other like means.
- (2) Inquire into and report to the Assembly on any question which -
  - (a) it deems necessary to investigate;
  - (b) (Deleted V. & P. p. 225, 18 June 2008);
  - (c) is referred to it by a Minister; or
  - (d) is referred to it by the Auditor General.
- (3) Consider any papers on public expenditure presented to the Assembly and such of the expenditure as it sees fit to examine.
- (4) Consider whether the objectives of public expenditure are being achieved, or may be achieved more economically.
- (5) The Committee will investigate any matter which is referred to it by resolution of the Legislative Assembly.



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Parliament House  
4 Harvest Terrace, West Perth WA 6005  
Telephone: +61 8 9222 7222  
Email: [laco@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:laco@parliament.wa.gov.au)  
Website: [www.parliament.wa.gov.au](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au)