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30 April 2015

Ms Susan Cardell
Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
jcpaa@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Cardell

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit regarding its inquiry into the Development of the Commonwealth Performance Framework.

My Office has enthusiastically embraced the reforms underpinned by the Performance Framework implemented through the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

The legislative integration of high standards of governance and performance reporting to provide more meaningful information on the use of public resources by Government, to taxpayers and the general public, is vital in a modern democracy.

As a result of the reforms, and in line with my Office's strategic planning practices, we have taken the opportunity to revisit the 'what' we will deliver (through the Portfolio Budget Statements) and the 'how' we will deliver through the drafting of our new Corporate Plan. The discipline provided under the Performance Framework has guided my Office into developing appropriate performance measures in readiness for the new Annual Performance Statements commencing in 2015-16.

We support the Department of Finance's efforts in developing Resource Management Guides and other supporting material and note the proactive education and community of practice measures currently in place. These elements are of particular utility to small Commonwealth entities such as ours who have limited resources at our disposal.

We anticipate that there will be significant challenges in meeting performance information requirements that will both enable performance comparisons across Commonwealth entities and ensure auditable performance information. The intended enhanced flexibility to performance management under the Performance Framework may not necessarily address the requirements that presently exist under accountability and oversight arrangements, but will enable flexibility for individual entities to develop performance arrangements that are fit for purpose for their operating environment. Notwithstanding, my Office trusts that in the interests of using and managing public resources properly, that the continuing reforms do not lose sight of reducing duplication or providing more streamlined and targeted information, efficiently and effectively.

We look forward to continuing to work cooperatively with other Commonwealth entities to achieve common objectives, where practicable. We would welcome any initiatives under the reforms to continue progress in this area.

Yours sincerely

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Colin Neave
Commonwealth Ombudsman