

Australian Public Service Commissioner



Australian Government
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Senator Cory Bernardi
Chair
Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Bernardi

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration, Legislation Committee's, Inquiry into the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Amendment Bill 2014 (Amendment Bill).

As is on the public record, I support the broad objectives of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act).

The PGPA Act has been previously considered by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) and I have made submissions to, and appeared before, the JCPAA outlining a number of concerns that I had about the PGPA Act, notwithstanding my overall support for the reform it represents. In June 2014 the JCPAA's Report 441, *Inquiry into Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 Rules Development*, recommended that the Department of Finance and the Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) work together to draft the necessary amendments to the PGPA Act and/or the Public Service Act 1999 (PS Act) to remove overlaps and reduce potential confusion from dual coverage, and that amendment proposals be put to the Parliament (Recommendation 4).

In response to the JCPAA recommendation, the Commission and the Department of Finance have been working together to consider the scope for amendments to the PGPA Act and the PS Act to harmonise as far as is feasible the general duties of officials set out in sections 25-29 of the PGPA Act and the APS Code of Conduct in the PS Act. Good progress has been made. Subject to Government approval amendments will be brought forward to Parliament.

To ensure the effective implement the PGPA Act from 1 July 2014, the Commission will continue to work with the Department of Finance so that APS employees have the clearest advice possible about the standards of behaviour expected of them, having regard to the PGPA Act and the PS Act.

I do not consider the information in this submission to be confidential.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Sedgwick AO, FIPAA

cf June 2014