



Public hearing on Regional Development Australia Fund

Parliament's Public Accounts Committee will hold a public hearing this Friday as part of its review of an Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) report on the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF).

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, and the ANAO will appear as witnesses.

Committee Chair, Dr Andrew Southcott MP, said that a number of issues in the report required further public scrutiny, with RDAF involving a significant outlay of public funds.

"The ANAO report emphasised there was not a clear trail through the assessment stages to demonstrate that the projects awarded funding were those with the greatest merit in terms of the published program guidelines. The ANAO also noted that the department had not implemented recommendations from a previous audit of the first RDAF funding round," Dr Southcott said.

"The report concluded that there needs to be greater adherence to published program guidelines and identified principles of better practice grants administration, and that decisions need to be made in accordance with the public interest and without regard to party political considerations."

The RDAF was established in 2011 as a nationally competitive, merit-based grants program. Four funding rounds were delivered between 2011 and 2013, with some \$226 million in grant funding being awarded to 121 projects under the third and fourth rounds. The ANAO's findings and recommendations are set out in Report No. 9 (2014-15), *Design and Conduct of the Third and Fourth Funding Rounds of the Regional Development Australia Fund*.

Details of the hearing are as follows:

Friday, 6 March 2015 – 9.30am to 11.30am

Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra

Further information about the inquiry, including the program for the hearing and copies of submissions, can be accessed via the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa.

The hearing will also be streamed live at

http://www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament.

For media comment: please contact Committee Chair, Dr Andrew Southcott MP, on 0402579674 (Matthew Hee).

For information about the inquiry and public hearing: please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4615, email jcpaa@aph.gov.au, or visit the Committee website <http://www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa>.