



## **Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit**

### **Answers to Questions on Notice**

**Appearance Date: 3 March 2021**

#### **Question 1**

**Are you aware of any other jurisdictions that have a parliamentary engagement strategy, or is it just WA?**

Many audit offices participate in a client survey benchmarking program, whereby parliaments and committees are surveyed on their general impression of their relevant audit office, the quality of both financial and performance audit reports and dealings with the Auditor General and their office. Results from this survey can assist in the development of relevant engagement strategies.

Audit offices have a variety of approaches to engaging with their respective parliaments and committees, depending on their legislated responsibilities to oversight committees and the types of audits they are mandated to conduct. The main objectives of parliamentary engagement strategies are to ensure that:

- audit offices maintain strong, impartial and constructive relationships with oversight committees and the parliament of the day
- members of parliament understand our approach to audit, know our communication channels and are kept informed of our audit programs and outcomes
- oversight committees consider that the Auditor General has close regard to their audit priorities in developing the audit program, and
- the findings and recommendations of our work provide members of Parliament (and particularly Committees) with a basis to hold entities and the Government of the day to account and provide assurance to the community on public administration.

Some strategies may follow long-established customs of consultation and communication, or obligation, such as responding to invitations from oversight Committees to appear at hearings or provide information. Other offices may take a more proactive approach by actively consulting on their audit program, providing information of interest to committees, and updating their strategies regularly depending on recommendations and lessons learned. Some proactive engagement activities include:

- advising committees when an audit or report of interest is commencing or tabled
- highlighting contentious matters in reports being presented for tabling
- leveraging off scheduled parliamentary activities such as an induction program for new members, and
- a schedule of meetings at officer level between audit office and committee staff to discuss recent audits and emerging theme

A number of audit offices combine their processes with existing strategies in their Communications or Corporate Services branches around topic selection, tabling reports and carrying out MP surveys, while others have a dedicated document.

For instance, the WA Office developed a discrete strategy so that all facets of engagement with committees, other members of parliament and parliamentary staff could be mapped out anew to reflect the schedule of the next parliament, revised strategic priorities, and recent suggestions from members of parliament and parliamentary office staff. It also seeks to address a number of persistent challenges, including the fact that Committee members have competing priorities and demands on their time.