

## Historical timeline of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA)

1913

- *Committee of Public Accounts Act 1913* is passed by the Commonwealth Parliament on 18 December. The committee is to consist of nine Members and Senators.

1914

- Three Senators are appointed to the Committee on 22 October, and six Members of the House of Representatives appointed on 27 November.
- The Committee meets for first time on 4 December. Matthew Charlton MP is elected Chairman, John Thomson MP is elected Vice Chairman.

1915

- The first 'taking of evidence' (hearing) by the Committee occurs on 9 February 1915.
- The first report presented to the Parliament is: *The Small Arms Factory, Lithgow, New South Wales*.

1920

- Under the *Committee of Public Accounts Act 1920*, the Committee's membership is increased to ten (seven House, three Senate). A range of other powers and procedures are added to the Act.

1931

- In July, during consideration of budget estimates, there are calls for the Public Accounts Committee to be abolished, expenditure reduced, and/or membership reduced.
- In October, the House of Representatives passes a Bill to reduce the Committee's membership to seven in order to lower costs. The Senate amends the Bill to further reduce the membership to five, but the House does not agree to the amendment before the House is dissolved on 27 November for an election.

1932

- The incoming Lyons Government announces in February that the Committee will be suspended, and new members are not appointed. A Select Committee is appointed in March for the purpose of finalising a draft report of the previous Committee on parliamentary control and procedure relating to public finances.
- The Select Committee on Public Accounts produces its report on 20 May, calling for the Statutory Committee to be promptly re-constituted and for its powers to investigate public accounts to be strengthened.
- The Committee is suspended indefinitely with the passage of the *Committee of Public Accounts Act 1932*.

1951

- The Committee is re-established with the passage of *Public Accounts Committee Act 1951*.
- The new committee has ten members (seven House, three Senate).

1953

- The re-established committee meets publicly for the first time on 19 February. FA Bland had earlier been elected Chairman and Senator Condon Byrne Vice-Chairman.
- The first report presented by the re-established Committee is *Supplementary Estimates 1951-52*.

1955

- The first female member of a Commonwealth Public Accounts Committee, Senator Dame Ivy Wedgewood, is appointed on 12 October. Senator Wedgewood serves on the Committee for nearly 16 years.

1977

- The first Conference of Commonwealth and State Public Accounts Committees takes place in Sydney in June. Periodic conferences continue in future years, eventually leading to the establishment of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees (ACPAC).

1979

- The Committee is given the power under the *Public Accounts Committee Amendment Act 1979* to examine the financial affairs of statutory authorities and other government bodies, and to examine efficiency audits reports presented by the Auditor-General (which are later renamed performance audits).

1982

- The Committee's first report on a review of an efficiency audit is tabled: Report 201 - *Efficiency Audit - Administration of Bilateral Overseas Aid*.

1983

- Membership of the Committee is expanded to 15 (ten House, five Senate) under the *Public Accounts Committee Amendment Act 1983*.

1986

- Under the *Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (No. 1) 1986*, the Committee is given responsibility for approving guidelines for annual reports produced by government agencies.

1988

- The Committee ceases routine reporting on expenditure under the 'Advance to the Minister for Finance' due to the overlapping mandate of the Senate Estimates committees (Report 289).

1989

- In Report 296, the Committee recommends reforms to the Audit Office, including replacement of the *Audit Act 1901*, and the formation of an 'Audit Committee'. Many of the key recommendations are accepted by the Government, eventually resulting in the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, the *Auditor-General Act 1997*, and increased powers for the JCPAA to provide oversight of the Audit Office (see below).

1998

- The *Audit (Transitional and Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 1997* comes into force on 1 January. The *Public Accounts Committee Act 1951* is amended to:
  - rename the Committee as the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA)
  - expand the Committee's membership to 16 (ten House, six Senate)
  - mandate the Committee's oversight of ANAO operations and resourcing, including consideration of Independent Auditor reports and consideration of the ANAO's draft budget estimates
  - require the Committee to determine the audit priorities of the Parliament for communication to the Auditor-General and the Independent Auditor
  - establish JCPAA oversight of the appointment of the Auditor-General and the Independent Auditor
  - change the Act's terminology from 'Chairman' and 'Vice-Chairman' to 'Chair' and 'Deputy Chair'
  - require the Committee to present an annual report on the performance of its duties.

2007

- The Committee's first annual/biannual hearing with the Commissioner of Taxation is held.

2008

- The Committee's first female Chair, Ms Sharon Grierson MP, is elected.

2009

- The first Defence Materiel Organisation Major Projects Report is reviewed by the Committee (Report 416: on the 2007-08 Major Projects Report).

2010

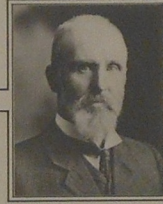
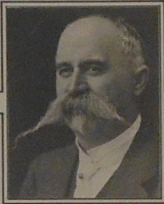
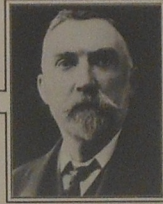
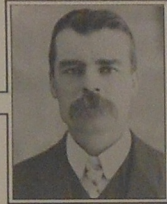
- The first non-government Chair, Mr Rob Oakeshott MP (Independent), is elected by the Committee.

2012

- The Committee is given new duties under the *Parliamentary Service Amendment (Parliamentary Budget Officer) Act 2011* for oversight of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO). Duties include approving the Government's nomination of a Parliamentary Budget Officer, considering the PBO's work plans and draft budget estimates, and reporting to both Houses of Parliament and the Presiding Officers on relevant matters.
- The first annual public hearing with key agencies responsible for public sector governance and administration is held.

# FIRST COMMITTEE

Appointed 5 December 1914



Chairman: Matthew Charlton, M.P. Vice-Chairman: John Thomson, M.P.  
Senator Thomas Jerome Kingston Bakhap Senator Albert Edward Howarth Blakey  
Senator the Honorable James Charles Stewart  
Llewelyn Atkinson, M.P. Reginald John Burchell, M.P.  
The Honorable James Mackinnon Fowler, M.P. Dr William Maloney, M.P.



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