



Committee to review Auditor-General's report on health care compliance

Parliament House, Canberra — Wednesday 21 March 2007

The Department of Health and Ageing, together with the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), will participate in a round table public hearing before the House of Representatives Health and Ageing Committee in Canberra on Wednesday 21 March.

Audit Report No. 19 2006-2007, *Administration of State and Territory Compliance with the Australian Health Care Agreements (AHCA)*, was tabled by the Auditor-General on 25 January 2007.

The Committee Chairman, Alex Somlyay, said "The Committee welcomes ANAO's contribution to the health debate on compliance by the states and territories. The ANAO report follows very quickly behind the tabling of the Committee's own inquiry report on health funding, *The Blame Game*, in December 2006."

ANAO made three keynote findings and recommended:

- Greater guidance should be given by the federal Health Department regarding assessment principles to the state and territory governments;
- Improvements in consistency and accuracy regarding emergency department data and inpatient waiting times should be regularly analysed, as per AHCA's principles; and
- The federal Health Department clarify the nature of assurance required from independent audits of state/territory recurrent expenditure on public hospital services; and review future auditors' statements to ascertain limitations or adverse findings on assessments of AHCA compliance.

"The Committee will review ANAO findings on compliance with Australian Health Care Agreements," Mr Somlyay said. "The public hearing will give an opportunity for the Health Department to discuss some key issues surrounding these Health Care Agreements – what are the desirable performance benchmarks to be instigated, what minimum levels of service would be required in new agreements, and how might that be achieved."

The hearing is open to all members of the public and webcast live (audio only) on:

<http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

Venue: Parliament House – House of Representatives Committee Room 1R6

The program for **Wednesday 21 March 2007** is as follows:

9.20am – 10.20am **Department of Health and Ageing & Australian National Audit Office**

For media interview with the Chairman:

Please contact Mr Alex Somlyay's electorate office on (07) 5471 6611.

For a copy of the terms of reference and further information on making a submission:

Contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4145, 0421 051 837 (mobile), or email

haa.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the website at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/haa/Auditreport/index.htm>