

**JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT**  
**18 MARCH 2009**

**OPENING STATEMENT**

Submission No: ..... 5 .....

1. The Department welcomes the performance audit of Disability Employment Services examining services under the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement 2002-07.
2. The ANAO found that DEEWR has responded to the changing environment and effectively planned, managed and implemented policy initiatives in the disability employment sector.
3. The committee may be aware that the Government is currently reviewing disability employment services. A Discussion Paper titled "The Future of Disability Employment Services in Australia" was released on 3 December 2008 followed by national consultation sessions. The discussion paper sought views on the proposed new model of disability employment services.
4. Submissions in response to the paper closed on 30 January 2009. Feedback from stakeholders was positive and supported a number of features of the proposed model. Key issues and comments received continue to inform the development of the proposed new model of disability employment services. The findings of the ANAO have been taken into account in the review to date and will continue to inform the development of the new disability employment services model.
5. The ANAO made two recommendations applicable to DEEWR – Recommendations 2 and 3 in the audit report. The Department agrees with Recommendation No. 2, that DEEWR provide sufficient information to DEN providers to allow reconciliation of payments against claims for individual clients. One of the guiding principles of the current Review of Disability Employment Services is to reduce complexity where possible and the funding model is an area the Government has identified as overly complex.
6. DEEWR is developing a package of information to assist DEN providers to reconcile their payments and claims. Peak representative bodies in the disability employment sector will have the opportunity to provide input on the draft package prior to its release to DEN providers.
7. DEEWR agrees with Recommendation No. 3, that in the context of plans to streamline compliance activities, DEEWR evaluate the impact of initiatives aimed at reducing the administrative workload of Disability Employment Network providers.
8. Through the Review of Disability Employment Services, the Government is focusing on creating streamlined service delivery and administration processes that provide transparency and accountability and minimise any unnecessary administrative burden on DEN providers. DEEWR will evaluate the impact of the relevant initiatives once the new disability employment services model has been implemented and bedded down.