

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

Cross Portfolio

DEEWR Question No.EW0659_11

Senator Mason asked on 21/10/2010, Hansard page 74.

Question

GREATER POWERS FOR COMMONWEALTH AUDITOR GENERAL

Senator MASON—Minister, I have a question about remedial action that is perhaps a bookend for the audit report and the BER itself. I wonder whether it would assist in future if the Commonwealth Auditor-General were to have greater powers to pursue the Commonwealth money trail through state instrumentalities. Mr McPhee raised at one stage, and it has been flagged elsewhere, that if he had those powers he could use them to better oversight Commonwealth expenditure, but that without them it is essentially left to the state auditors-general. I was just wondering whether the government has given any thought to that idea—not just for the BER, but across the board. Senator Chris Evans—I would want to take that on notice.

Answer

This issue was covered in the terms of reference of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) Inquiry into the Auditor-General Act 1997. While that inquiry lapsed with the prorogation of the Parliament on 19 July 2010, it would be appropriate to respond to this issue through any recommendations arising from that Inquiry.