

## AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

1.1 The Australian Democrats fully support the Chair's report and endorse all recommendations.

1.2 As the Chair's report details, the Government's IT Outsourcing initiative, announced in 1997, was seriously flawed in process, planning, management, consultation, documentation and accountability. We believe these flaws undermined the possible benefits for Government, community and the local ICT industry of a coherent and balanced approach to IT outsourcing.

1.3 Considered alongside this committee's two interim reports<sup>1</sup>, the ANAO report of September 2000 and the Humphry Review, the Chair's report substantiates important community misgivings about the Government's basic assumptions concerning cost savings and benefits from outsourcing.

1.4 The Democrats believe that the excessive and ideologically driven insistence on IT outsourcing where there was no demonstrated benefit but considerable risk, notably, but by no means exclusively in the case of CSIRO, ANSTO and other science agencies, is symptomatic of a disturbing poverty in developing and defending an understanding of 'national interest'.

1.5 The Democrats are most concerned that uncritical assumptions about the efficacy and benefits of markets and the blinkered pursuit of privatising crucial functions of the public domain, be it in education, health, public assets or IT capability constitutes a serious abrogation of responsibility to the Australian community.

1.6 The Democrats hope that the lessons to be learnt from the IT outsourcing process will contribute to a wider and fundamental debate about the role and responsibility of government and a re-invigorated concern for acknowledging and defending national interest.

**Senator Brian Greig**  
**Australian Democrats**  
**IT Spokesperson**

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<sup>1</sup> Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee, *Accountability In A Commercial Environment: Emerging Issues*, April 2000 and *Accountability Issues: Two Case Studies*, June 2001.

