

41ST PARLIAMENT



Public Accounts Committee

Report 12

ANNUAL REPORT 2023–2024

Presented by Mrs L.M. O'Malley, MLA

October 2024

Committee Members

Chair	Mrs L.M. O'Malley, MLA Member for Bicton
Deputy Chair	Ms L. Mettam, MLA Member for Vasse
Members	Mr H.T. Jones, MLA Member for Darling Range
	Ms K.E. Giddens, MLA Member for Bateman
	Ms L. Dalton, MLA Member for Geraldton

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Annual Report 2023–2024

Report No. 12

Presented by

Mrs L.M. O'Malley, MLA

Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on 17 October 2024

Chair's Foreword

As Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (the Committee), I present for tabling the Committee's Annual Report for the 2023–2024 financial year.

We commenced this reporting period with a primary focus on the continuation of our inquiry into how the Western Australian Government's progress towards achieving Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) outcomes is assisting to secure international investment. This inquiry received 18 submissions from a wide variety of interested parties, including State Government entities, advocacy groups and individuals. In addition to the submissions, the Committee held 11 public hearings throughout the Inquiry.

Further, to gain an understanding of what was happening in other Australian jurisdictions, the Committee conducted investigative travel to Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland in October 2023. We held 13 interstate briefings, hearing from 35 individuals, and the information we gathered greatly informed our understanding of the issues and our considerations in the report.

Other activities of the Committee during this time included co-hosting the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees Mid-term Meeting and Biennial Conference, the tabling of two reports, 23 deliberative meetings and 12 public hearings where we heard from 25 witnesses.

We also continued our important work of following-up State Government entity responses to recommendations made by the Auditor General for Western Australia in her audit reports. The Committee's 10th report, titled Review of Selected Auditor General Reports 2018–2023, was tabled in November 2023. This report includes a summary of the Committee's consideration of 39 Auditor General reports tabled between October 2018 and March 2023.

Finally, as we conclude this term of government, I would like to sincerely thank the other members of the Committee, Ms Libby Mettam, Member for Vasse, Ms Kim Giddens, Member for Bateman, Ms Lara Dalton, Member for Geraldton, and Mr Hugh Jones, Member for Darling Range, for their dedication, commitment and camaraderie during their time on the Committee. It has been an honour and a great privilege to serve as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee in the 41st Parliament.



MRS L.M. O'MALLEY, MLA
CHAIR

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Chapter 1

Committee Activities

Introduction

- 1.1 During the course of this reporting period (see Table 1.1), the Public Accounts Committee:
- continued work on our inquiry into how the Western Australian Government’s progress towards achieving Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) outcomes is assisting to secure international investment.
 - co-hosted the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees Mid-term Meeting and Biennial Conference
 - tabled 2 reports
 - held 23 deliberative meetings
 - held 12 public hearings, taking evidence from 25 witnesses
 - held 13 interstate briefings as part of the ESG Inquiry, hearing from 35 people

Table 1.1: Summary of the activities of the Committee, 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024

Description	Activity
Briefings	13
Deliberative meetings	23
Formal evidence hearings	12
Witnesses appearing	25
Reports tabled	2

Portfolios

- 1.2 The five portfolios of the Committee as determined by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the 41st Parliament are:
- Premier
 - Treasurer
 - Finance
 - Public Sector Management
 - Federal-State Relations

Public Hearings

- 1.3 Pursuant to Assembly Standing Order 264, the Committee has power to send for persons, papers and records. During the period 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024, the Committee conducted 12 public hearings, taking evidence from 25 witnesses (see Table 1.2). All but one of the public hearings was undertaken as part of the Inquiry activities. The Committee held one

public hearing with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as part of our follow-up of Auditor General reports.

Table 1.2: Public Hearings of the Committee, 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024

Date	Name	Position	Organisation
13 September 2023	Lanie Chopping	Director General	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
	Tim Fraser	Executive Director	
	Neta Gill	Director, Governance and Risk	
11 October 2023	Larissa Taylor	Director and ESG Consultant	Savoir Consulting
8 November 2023	Jaime Yallup Farrant	Organiser and Convenor	Climate Justice Union
	Lucie O'Sullivan	Student and Research Assistant	Climate Justice Union
	Jacob West	First Nations Community Project Coordinator	Telethon Kids Institute; HEAL WA
29 November 2023	Rebecca Tomkinson	Chief Executive Officer	The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of WA
	Adrienne Labombard	Director, Policy and Advocacy	
	Aaron Walker	Manager, Industry Competitiveness	
14 February 2024	Professor Peter Klinken	Chief Scientist of Western Australia	Office of the Chief Scientist – Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation
21 February 2024	Tim Milsom	Chief Executive Officer	Noongar Chamber of Commerce and Industry
11 March 2024	Jacqueline McGowan-Jones	Commissioner for Children and Young People	Commissioner for Children and Young People
	Megan Sadler	Manager, Media Communications and Engagement	
11 March 2024	Professor Peter Newman	John Curtin Distinguished Professor of Sustainability	Curtin University
11 March 2024	Brianna Peake	Chief Stakeholder Relations, Sustainability and Strategy Officer	CBH Group
	Jane Wardle	Lead, Sustainability, CBH Marketing and Trading	

18 March 2024	Michael Court	Deputy Under Treasurer	Department of Treasury
	Richard Watson	Assistant Under Treasurer, Agency Budgeting and Governance	
	Pauline Burton	Director, Financial Policy and Operations	
	Brendan Davies	Assistant Director, Financial Policy	
20 March 2024	Alistair Jones	Director General	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
	Emily Briggs	Deputy Director General, Climate and Sustainability	
	Sarah Gill	Director, Climate Change Division	
8 May 2024	Dwayne Mallard	Founder and Managing Director	Arjaway

Briefings and Investigative Travel

1.4 In addition to formal hearings, the Committee conducted 13 interstate briefings. The briefings were used to gain information related to the Committee's Inquiry (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Briefings provided to the Committee, 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024

Date	Name	Position	Organisation
23 October 2023	Michael Larkin	Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director	Treasury Corporation of Victoria
	Mike van de Graaf	Executive Director, Risk	
	Paul Kelly	Head of Markets	
	Michelle Siekierka	General Council/Corporation Secretary	
	Rob Hibbard	Senior Project Advisor	
23 October 2023	Matt Genever	Interim Chief Executive Officer	Sustainability Victoria
23 October 2023	Kate Galvin	Chief Executive Officer	Victorian Funds Management Corporation
	Russell Clarke	Chief Investment Officer	
	Shali Lingaretnam	Head of Investment Stewardship	
24 October 2023	Michael Reid	Director, Office of the Commissioner	Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability, Victoria
	Dr Scott Rawlings	Director, Science and Reporting	
25 October 2023	Lee Holloway	Director, Women's Economic Outcomes	NSW Treasury
	Ruth Sheridan	Acting Director, Indigenous Expenditure and Outcomes	

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25 October 2023	Alison Weaver	Director, Sustainable Finance	NSW Treasury
	Aleksandra Simic	Director, Social Impact Investment	
	Amy Zhu	Associate Director, Sustainable Finance	
25 October 2023	Erin-Lea Brown	Acting Director, Macroeconomy Division	NSW Treasury
	Xuan Deng	Director, Performance Budgeting Framework	
	Shweta Dey	Associate Director, Performance Budgeting Framework	
26 October 2023	Jacqueline Moore	Executive Director, Legal, Governance and People	Environmental Protection Authority NSW
	Jackie Miles	Director, Policy and Strategy	
	Rebecca Irwin	Acting Director, Corporate Affairs and Engagement	
	Joe Budnik	Acting Director, Risk and Governance	
26 October 2023	Jeremy Lawson	Deputy Head of Department, International Department, Executive Climate Lead	Reserve Bank of Australia
	Anna Park	Senior Manager, Climate Analysis & Policy, International Department	
26 October 2023	Anthony Mitri	Deputy Chief Executive Officer, The College	University of Western Sydney, The College
27 October 2023	Jamie Merrick	Director-General	Department of Environment and Science, Queensland
	Ben Klaassen	Deputy Director-General, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships	
	Liz Young	Acting Executive Director, Climate Action and Sustainable Planning	
27 October 2023	Dennis Molloy	Deputy Under Treasurer	Queensland Treasury
	Edwin Dewan	Director, Economic Policy	
	Lachlan Whitta	Manager, Balance Sheet and Sustainable Finance	
	Susan Buckley	Managing Director, Funding and Markets	Queensland Treasury Corporation
	Jose Fajardo	Executive Director, Head of Funding and Liquidity	
	James Brown	Principal, Funding and Markets Division	

Reports Tabled

1.5 The Committee tabled two reports during the period 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024:

Report No. 9: Annual Report 2022–2023

1.6 Tabled in September 2023, this report details the activities of the Public Accounts Committee from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Report No. 10: Review of Selected Auditor General Reports 2018–2023

1.7 Tabled in November 2023, the purpose of this report is to inform Parliament of the actions undertaken by public sector entities in response to recommendations made in audit reports tabled by the Auditor General. This report includes a summary of the Committee's consideration of 39 Auditor General reports tabled between October 2018 and March 2023. This included eight COVID-19 related audit reports and eleven audit reports related to local government entities.

Other Activities

Follow-up of Auditor General recommendations

1.8 The Committee continued its important work of following-up State Government agency responses to recommendations made by the Auditor General for Western Australia in their audit reports. This practice supports the Auditor General, who has no specific power to elicit responses or actions taken to address their recommendations, other than periodically undertaking follow-up audits.

Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees – Co-Chair

1.9 During the reporting period, the Committee, together with the Estimates and Financial Operations Committee (EFOC) of the Legislative Council, acted as the secretariat of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees (ACPAC). This involved hosting the ACPAC Mid-term Meeting virtually in September 2023 and the Biennial Conference in April 2024 (ACPAC '24 or the Conference).

1.10 The main purpose of ACPAC is to enhance the function of Public Accounts Committees across the member jurisdictions through the exchange of information. Under its Constitution, ACPAC must hold a biennial conference which provides a forum for ACPAC members and staff to discuss issues specifically pertaining to Australasian Committees.

1.11 At the ACPAC Mid-term Meeting a draft ACPAC '24 program was presented and endorsed by members present. This enabled the PAC secretariat, in consultation with the EFOC secretariat, to commence formal preparations for ACPAC '24.

1.12 The Conference, held over three days from 21 April to 23 April 2024, included a Welcome Reception on the rooftop of the Art Gallery of Western Australia; two full days of presentations and discussions; a formal Conference Dinner; and a farewell event hosted by the Presiding Officers, Hon Michelle Roberts MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Hon Alanna Clohesy MLC, President of the Legislative Council.

- 1.13 In addition to ACPAC delegates, members of the Australasian Council of Auditors-General were invited to attend the first day of the Conference. In total, APCAC '24 attracted over 50 delegates from Australia and overseas (see Image 1.1 below).

Image 1.1: ACPAC '24 Biennial Conference attendees¹



- 1.14 Day one of the Conference included a keynote speech by Caroline Spencer, Auditor General for Western Australia, on the role of auditors and Parliament within our system of checks and balances. In addition to the keynote speech, the Conference program included 10 sessions on a wide variety of topics presented by members of the Public Accounts Committees and Auditors-General from across the jurisdictions.
- 1.15 ACPAC conferences aim to operate on a cost recovery basis. The registration fees, set at \$550² per delegate (including GST), covered the cost of the Conference, including the Welcome Reception, conference bags, Welcome to Country, catering, and Conference Dinner.
- 1.16 Following the Conference, we distributed a survey to all attending delegates requesting feedback, largely to assist the Tasmanian Parliament who have taken over the APCAC secretariat role. Feedback from the survey was very positive, with 80% of delegates who responded rating the Conference as excellent and nearly 90% indicating the Conference enhanced their understanding of topics relevant to Public Accounts Committees.

1 Not all ACPAC '24 delegates are present in this photograph.

2 The registration fee for Auditors-General who attended day one of the Conference was set at \$250 (incl. GST) per delegate inclusive of the Welcome Reception.

Environment, Social and Governance Inquiry

- 1.17 During the reporting period, the Committee continued its Inquiry into how the WA Government's progress towards achieving ESG outcomes is assisting to secure international investment.
- 1.18 As the Inquiry topic covered complex and evolving fields, the Committee focused on one key area: the role of the State Government in adopting policies that align with national policy developments and international trends to ultimately attract and maintain investment into WA.
- 1.19 The Inquiry received 18 submissions from a wide variety of interested parties, including State Government entities, advocacy groups and individuals. In addition to the submissions, the Committee held 11 public hearings throughout the Inquiry.
- 1.20 Further, to gain an understanding of what was happening in other Australian jurisdictions, the Committee conducted investigative travel to Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland in October 2023 (see Image 1.2 below). We held 13 briefings and the information we gathered greatly informed our understanding of the issues and our considerations in the report.

Image 1.2: The Committee at the Sustainability Victoria office while conducting investigative travel.



From L to R: Libby Mettam MLA, Deputy Chair; Matt Genever, Interim CEO, Sustainability Victoria; Lisa O'Malley MLA, Chair; Lara Dalton MLA, Member; Kim Giddens MLA, Member; and Hugh Jones MLA, Member.

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- 1.21 Taking the evolving policy and regulation landscape into consideration, the Committee intends to make broad recommendations within its report to Parliament. We expect these recommendations will look at opportunities for the State Government to continue to improve its ESG outcomes and secure further investment into WA.
- 1.22 The Committee will table its report in August 2024 and anticipates receipt of a State Government response to the recommendations within the report by mid-November.

Chapter 2

Financial Statement

2.1 The Committee does not have its own formal budget and is funded out of the budget of the Legislative Assembly. Approval for major expenditures is required on a case-by-case basis and is entirely at the discretion of the Speaker.

2.2 The Committee's expenditure for the financial year 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024 (in accordance with Standing Order 276) is detailed below:

Table 2.1: Expenditure items of the Committee, 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024

Expenditure Item	Amount (\$)
Advertising	3,674
Consultants	2,250
Conference registration fees	3,500
Travel including conference fees	52,446
Printing	171
Staff and member amenities	234
TOTAL	62,275

Notes:

- Salaries of committee staff are not included.
- Costs of shared administrative expenses, including lease costs for committee accommodation, not included.



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CHAIR



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