

Your guide to investigations being conducted by House of Representatives and Joint Committees

For information on these and other parliamentary committees visit www.aph.gov.au/house/committee or call the committee inquiry line: (02) 6277 4399.

Education and Training

- Education of boys

Public Accounts and Audit

- Review of Independent Auditing by Registered Company Auditors
- Review of Auditor-General's Reports
- Review of Accrual Budget Documentation
- Review of Australia's Quarantine Function

Public Works

- Infrastructure to support proposed space centre on Christmas Island

Treaties

- 1998 Statute of an International Criminal Court
- Treaties tabled on 7 and 21 August 2001
 - Agreement with Argentina concerning cooperation in Peaceful use of Nuclear Energy
 - Agreement on Nuclear Safeguards with Hungary
 - Agreement on Nuclear Safeguards with the Czech Republic
 - Agreement with the United States on Nuclear Transfers to Taiwan
- Treaties tabled on 12 March 2002

Bilateral Agreements

- Agreement with France on the Employment of Dependants of Agents of Official Missions

- Agreement with Uruguay on the Promotion and Protection of Investments
- Agreement with Egypt on the Promotion and Protection of Investments
- Exchange of Letters with New Zealand amending the Agreement establishing a System for the Development of Joint Food Standards
- Agreement with the Kyrgyz Republic concerning the Status of Forces in the Kyrgyz Republic
- Exchange of notes amending the Social Security Agreement with New Zealand
- Agreement with the United States on Social Security
- Agreement with the Netherlands on Mutual Administrative Assistance for the Application of Customs Law and for the Prevention, Investigation and Combating of Customs Offences
- Protocol to the Double Taxation Agreement with the United States

Multilateral Agreements

- Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER)
- International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings
- Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in Respect of Parental Responsibilities and Measures for the Protection of Children
- Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European Region

Spotlight on private sector auditors

In the wake of the recent spate of spectacular corporate collapses in Australia and overseas, federal parliament's Public Accounts and Audit Committee will review the operation of independent private sector auditing firms.

Announcing the review, the Committee Chair, Bob Charles (Member for La Trobe, Vic), said: "The spate of recent corporate collapses in Australia and overseas has attracted much public attention and comment. It is a matter of intense concern to the committee particularly because auditors have been seen to have signed-off on the financial health of companies which have subsequently failed.

"While corporate failure is ultimately the responsibility of directors, the community also expects auditors to report fairly and accurately on the financial state of the companies they are auditing.

"If such failures had occurred in the public sector, the public and the parliament would have expected the Commonwealth's auditor, the Auditor-General, to be held to account.

"With respect to the private sector, shareholders and the public have legitimate expectations of the effectiveness of auditors which are clearly not being satisfied.

"The audit function provides independent assurance on the operations and accounts of entities in the private and public sectors, and is very significant in maintaining business confidence itself vital to our economic performance as a nation."

The inquiry will seek to determine precisely where the balance lies between the need for external controls through government regulation and the freedom for industry to self-regulate.

The closing date for written submissions to the inquiry is Friday 24 May 2002. Public hearings will be held in June and July.

For more information, including the inquiry terms of reference

Visit: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jpaa

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