

INAUGURAL PUBLIC SECTOR AUDIT FORUM

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

7 - 10 APRIL 2008

COMMUNIQUE

A Public Sector Audit Forum concluded in Melbourne today. The inaugural Forum was open to National, State, Territorial and Provincial Auditors-General, legislative auditors and representatives from regional associations of public sector audit. Auditors-General from the Australasian region were joined by Canadian and European colleagues.

The Forum aimed to provide:

- An understanding of shared challenges faced by public sector auditors
- Opportunities to draw on good ideas in other regions
- Ideas for collaboration on shared issues
- A basis for establishing mutual support and peer review arrangements
- Stronger networks and opportunities for professional exchange

The Forum considered:

- a) Major challenges that public sector auditors face in recruiting and retaining the right staff in an era of global talent shortage. It was considered important to have robust processes for acquiring the right staff and then critically important to have effective strategies to retain them.
- b) The continuing challenges of maintaining audit quality when changes brought about by globalisation of accounting and auditing standards and legislative and compliance requirements are increasing rapidly. Responses revolved around having the right tools, the right people and the right leadership as the foundation.
- c) The importance of maintaining key stakeholder relationships at a time of heightened expectations and against a background of practical limits on audit capacity and increasing public sector complexity. Key strategies focussed on effectiveness of communication and engagement with the Parliament, its committees, the community and the media and fostering constructive relationships with audited entities.

Items identified for future consideration:

- Providing assurance regarding environmental reporting issues such as Climate Change, Carbon Trading, and Sustainability Planning and Reporting.
- Establishing processes to share and leverage information and resources across the Australasian Council of Auditors General (ACAG), the Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors (CCOLA) and the European Organisation of Regional Audit Offices.
- Collaborating on resource and capability planning and implementation.

- Exchanging staff between jurisdictions to share better practice, meet resource demands and provide inter-office reviews.

FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

Delegates saw value in meeting on an annual basis to pursue issues of common interest.

The respective Executive Committees of ACAG and COLA were tasked with progressing future opportunities and initiatives, via teleconferences.

The aims of this inaugural Forum were endorsed as an appropriate foundation to guide future activities.