



Speech by
Dr DAVID WATSON
MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard 7 October 2003

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Report

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Lib) (10.23 a.m.): I table report No. 64 of the Public Accounts Committee which examines whether the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 should be amended to permit the Queensland Audit Office to undertake other services not currently specified in the act. I also table the submissions received.

I am tabling this report in my capacity as acting chair of the committee. As members of this House would be aware, the member for Kallangur, Ken Hayward, stepped aside as chair on 16 July. I advise the House that, while the member for Kallangur was involved in the initial planning stages of this inquiry, he has had no involvement in the preparation of this report or the formulation of the recommendations.

This inquiry was initiated following the advice from the Auditor-General about activities that the Audit Office was pursuing. These activities appeared to the committee to be outside the legislative audit mandate. In particular, the committee was concerned about the proposed commercial activities that involved a partnership arrangement between the Audit Office and a private sector accounting firm.

The committee's overriding concern is to ensure that both the actual and perceived independence of the statutory office of Auditor-General is preserved. While there are constitutional powers that address commercial activities of the state, the committee does not believe these should override the legislative audit mandate. If the Auditor-General's role is to extend beyond auditing public sector entities of the state, that should be a decision for the parliament on a case-by-case basis. Finally, I thank the other members of the committee for their support and assistance throughout this inquiry. I would particularly like to thank the member for Mackay, Tim Mulherin, for his considered advice. I commend the report to the House.