

# Wagga Wagga

## steps into the financial spotlight

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Wagga Wagga (NSW) recently took over from Sydney and Melbourne as the financial news hub of Australia. It became the first regional centre to host the six-monthly meeting between the House of Representatives Economics Committee and the Reserve Bank. The public hearing, attended by a large contingent of media and members of the local community, was held in the Wagga Wagga Council Chambers. Also attending the hearing were senior economics students from two local schools, Trinity Senior High School and Wagga Wagga High School. It was a valuable opportunity for them to witness first-hand the processes of parliamentary accountability at work.



At the Reserve Bank hearing in Wagga Wagga, House Economics Committee members had the opportunity to speak with students from Trinity Senior High School and Wagga Wagga High School. Left to right: Kay Hull, David Hawker (Chair), Anna Burke (Deputy Chair) and Alex Somlyay.



House Economics Committee members with the Reserve Bank Governor in Wagga Wagga. Left to right: Andrew Southcott, David Hawker (Chair), Anna Burke (Deputy Chair), Ian Macfarlane (Reserve Bank Governor), Kay Hull, Alex Somlyay and Mark Latham.

As well as participating in the hearing, members of the House Economics Committee and the Reserve Bank Governor, Ian Macfarlane, met with representatives of the Wagga Wagga community at various events coordinated by the Federal Member for Riverina, Kay Hull, also a member of the Economics Committee. This included a civic reception hosted by the Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Kevin Wales. These events provided an opportunity for community representatives to let Committee members and the Reserve Bank Governor know how current economic issues were impacting on regional Australia.

The next House Economics Committee hearing with the Reserve Bank will be held in Melbourne on Friday, 11 May 2001. For more information, call the Committee on (02) 6277 4587.

## Extra accountability in Parliament

Accountability is a principal concern of Parliament and, recently, extra effort has been devoted to ensuring that public accountability stays high on Parliament's agenda. In February, parliamentarians and auditors-general from across Australia and from Canada, Fiji, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, South Africa and the United Kingdom gathered in Parliament House Canberra for the 6th Biennial Conference of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees. The conference was hosted by Federal Parliament's financial watchdog, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit.

The agenda for the conference focused on the significant public accountability issues and challenges which have arisen for parliamentarians and auditors as a result of recent changes to the public sector. These include outsourcing and the introduction of accrual accounting.

Bob Charles, Chairman of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, spoke on the impact which devolution has had on the public sector. "Public Accounts Committees have legitimate concerns about privacy issues, risk management in the new contestable environment, the retention of corporate memory in the public sector, and contract negotiation and management," Mr Charles said. Each of these topics was the subject of papers delivered at the conference.



Bob Charles, Chairman of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, speaking at the 6th Biennial Conference of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees held at Parliament House in Canberra.

Papers from the conference are available for \$49 a copy by writing to: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT 2600

Cheques should be made payable to: *Collector of Public Monies – Department of the House of Representatives*

### For more information

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