

## **Tasmanian Audit Office**

### **Terms of Reference for an audit of staffing arrangements for Members of Parliament and Ministerial Offices**

#### **Background**

On 22 June 2009 the Premier wrote to the Auditor-General seeking his agreement to conduct a complete review of the processes used to employ people to support Ms Allison Ritchie in her various roles dating back to her election in 2001. The Premier suggested that such a review would ensure the community has access to the full facts.

#### **Authority for the Auditor-General to conduct such an audit**

Section 23 “Examinations and investigations” of the *Audit Act 2008* includes the provision that the Auditor-General may at any time carry out an examination or investigation for one or more of the following purpose:

- (c) investigating any matter relating to public money or other money, or to public property or other property.

The employment of persons to work for Members of Parliament normally involves the payment of public money. Therefore, the Auditor-General has the authority to conduct an audit of this matter.

#### **Auditor-General’s view regarding this request**

The Auditor-General supports the conduct of such a review but considers a broader review should be initiated covering the specific matter raised by the Premier plus a review of:

1. The current rules and other documented requirements as issued by the House of Assembly, the Legislative Council and the Government relating to the recruitment by all Members of Parliament or by Ministerial Offices of family members. That includes situations where a family member of one Member is employed either by that Member or by another Member of Parliament.
2. Any policy documentation currently in place regarding the employment of family members as issued by the Government, the House of Assembly, the Legislative Council, the Department of Premier and Cabinet or by either Opposition Party.
3. Legislative or code of conduct requirements relating to the disclosure by Members of Parliament of family interests.

## **Audit objective**

To form an opinion as to whether:

- adequate guidance exists for all Members as to whether, or in what circumstances, they are permitted to engage family members to work in electoral offices or as ministerial advisors
- Members have complied with existing guidelines, policies or codes of conduct.
- Related matters identified in the *Clarke Report* are being adequately addressed.

## **Audit Scope**

- All current Members of Parliament and Ms Ritchie
- Ministerial advisors and electoral office staff
- Period covered – to be determined but in Ms Ritchie’s case since her election in 2001.

## **Conduct of the audit**

The Auditor-General will engage an expert in Human Resources management and utilise this person along with existing Tasmanian Audit Office staff to conduct the audit. The audit will involve:

- the development and application of a survey instrument to be sent to every existing Member of Parliament and to Ms Ritchie
- documentation review
- interviews with selected Members of Parliament and Ms Ritchie
- interviews with selected Ministerial staff and staff of Members
- review of the “Clarke” report and actions taken.

## **Timeframes**

To be finalised once resourcing determined

## **Budget**

To be finalised once resourcing determined

HM Blake  
Auditor-General  
23 June 2009