The Fourth Residential Summer School for Parliamentary Public Accounts Committees will be held in Australia from Sunday 8th to Saturday 14th February 2009. The Program will focus on building effective Public Accounts Committees as the Parliament’s primary means of financial scrutiny of the Executive. It will combine both the theoretical and the practical, with a five-day retreat style, training course at La Trobe University’s Beechworth Campus, and a visit to the Victorian Parliament.

The Summer School is aimed at Chairs and Members of Public Accounts Committees, Auditors-General and Audit Office staff, and Public Accounts Committees staffs. Each Country delegation will comprise five members, drawn from these groups. Participants should be prepared to make a presentation on Public Accounts Committee practice in their jurisdiction.

Topics to be covered in the program will include:

- **Public Financial Accountability and Parliaments** – define and examine the key concepts of financial scrutiny and critical features of public accountability, including the Auditor General and public Accounts Committee as a mechanism for facilitating transparency and minimising corruption.
- **Building Effective Public Accounts Committees** – draws on a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association study, and the recent KPMG/PSGARC study of Australasian PACs to look at how PACs work and whether they are fulfilling expectations.
- **Enhancing Public Accounts Committee Performance** – looks at the challenges facing PACs, in particular, capacity building, independence and information exchange, and how these challenges may be met.
- **Auditors-General and Public Accounts Committees** – the roles of the PAC and AG are intertwined, this will look at how they can best work together and what should be the relationship between them.
- **Benchmarking and Standards for Public Accounts Committees** – as there are no defined or required standards for PAC performance, how can PACs evaluate themselves to ensure that they are carrying out the role that Parliament expects?
- **National and Regional Associations of Public Accounts Committees** – Information exchanges are seen as one of the most effective ways of improving and establishing international standards of performance. This session will look at the benefits of Associations of PACs drawing on the activities of already established groups.
- **Country Action Plans** – a requirement of the program will be that each country delegation develops a specific Action Plan for improving PAC performance in its jurisdiction. Returning countries will be required to report on progress against their previously developed plans.
- **Effective Parliamentary Committee Inquiries Course** - from 16th to 20th February 2009 a parallel program aimed specifically at Parliamentary Committee staff will be conducted by the Centre for Democratic Institutions, in conjunction with the Parliament of New South Wales, in Sydney. This will focus on the practical aspects of parliamentary committee work including conducting a committee inquiry and writing a committee inquiry report. All committee staff attending the Summer School are required to attend this 5 day program.

For further information about participation in the 2009 Summer School please contact:

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