



**ASIC**

Australian Securities & Investments Commission

# Opening Statement: Parliamentary Joint Committee

*A speech by Greg Medcraft, Chairman,  
Australian Securities and Investments Commission*

*Parliamentary Joint Committee  
19 November 2015*

## ***CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY***

### **Introduction**

Good afternoon Chairman. Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee. Representing ASIC today are Commissioners:

- Cathie Armour
- John Price, and
- Greg Tanzer.

Supporting the Commission, are Senior Executive Leaders:

- Warren Day
- Greg Kirk
- Louise Macaulay
- Tim Mullaly
- Michael Saadat, and
- Chris Savundra.

Deputy Chairman Peter Kell is unable to attend today and sends his apologies. He is in Sydney hosting the annual National Financial Literacy Forum on behalf of ASIC, which I also addressed this morning.

## National Financial Literacy Strategy Forum 2015

On that note, today I would like to brief the Committee on this important event – and update the members and senators more generally on some of ASIC’s work in the area of financial literacy.

The National Financial Literacy Forum is the major national event which brings together all the key participants in financial literacy in Australia, as well as overseas experts.

At the forum today, there are more than 150 representatives from government, community, education and business sectors. Participants include:

- members of the Australian Government Financial Literacy Board, chaired by Paul Clitheroe
- government departments such as the Department of Human Services, Department of Social Services, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Australian Taxation Office and Treasury
- representatives from state and territory education departments and schools
- senior representatives from the banking, insurance, super and advice sectors, and
- representatives from the community and consumer sectors such as financial counsellors.

The forum is an opportunity to assess progress on the National Financial Literacy Strategy 2014–17.

## ASIC’s financial literacy work

As this Committee knows, ASIC is responsible for leading the National Financial Literacy Strategy. This is consistent with our strategic priority to promote investor and financial consumer trust and confidence in the financial system.

We run a strategic program of financial literacy initiatives in support of the National Financial Literacy Strategy, including:

- *ASIC’s MoneySmart website*, which provides trusted and impartial financial guidance and decision-making tools for consumers. It covers all aspects of personal finance, for all ages and all life stages. In a financial environment characterised by compulsory super, access to impartial and trusted information is essential.
- *ASIC’s MoneySmart Teaching*, which is a national program, aligned to the Australian curriculum, to support and promote financial literacy in schools operated in partnership with state and territory education departments. We know that attitudes towards money matters are established from a young age, and so it is critical to start this learning early.

ASIC’s work in this space complements and supports that of a range of other government departments and agencies. For example we have worked closely with:

- the Office for Women to develop an innovative women's money toolkit to address financial challenges faced by many women
- the Australian Defence Force on a dedicated financial education program for defence force personnel, and
- the Department of Human Services on resources such as a 'rent vs buy' calculator, to help people understand the true cost of consumer leases and to consider alternatives.

Many other organisations across government, industry, community and education sectors are also involved in implementing financial literacy programs or initiatives that support the strategy's priorities.

## National Financial Literacy Strategy Annual Highlights Report 2014–15

Mr Chairman, when ASIC released the National Financial Literacy Strategy, it committed to reporting each year on progress. ASIC has gathered information from key stakeholders across all sectors, to prepare the *National Financial Literacy Strategy Annual Highlights Report 2014–15*, which I'm happy to table today.

The report was launched today at the forum in Sydney, and will be published on the National Financial Literacy Strategy website. It provides a clear picture of collective progress under the National Financial Literacy Strategy, and tells the story of strong commitment across sectors.

We will be sending copies to all Australian Government Senators, members of parliament, and education, community and financial services stakeholders.

Some highlights for 2014–15 from the report include:

- over 5 million people visited ASIC's MoneySmart. Importantly, our surveys continue to show that around 80% of visitors to the site take action to improve their financial situation
- 4.5 million views of ASIC's MoneySmart calculators
- over 150,000 downloads of ASIC's MoneySmart apps during the year
- over 4,000 teachers completed ASIC's MoneySmart Teaching professional development in 2014–15, and over 14,300 have taken part since the program began
- over 3,000 schools (approximately 34% of all Australian schools) engaged with ASIC's MoneySmart Teaching program
- over 380,000 print publications distributed, and
- 1.5 million people reached by ASIC's MoneySmart on Twitter.

We are happy to offer the Committee and other interested parliamentarians a more thorough briefing on the National Financial Literacy Strategy. We can also provide a demonstration of how ASIC's financial literacy tools can help you and members of your community in 2016, if you wish.

Chairman, we are now happy to take questions.