



*Zali Steggall MP*

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WARRINGAH

15 December 2023

The Auditor-General  
Mr Grant Hehir  
Australian National Audit Office  
GPO Box 707  
Canberra ACT 2601

By email: [grant.hehir@anao.gov.au](mailto:grant.hehir@anao.gov.au)

### **Review of the Proceeds of Crime Fund**

Dear Auditor-General,

I am writing to request that you conduct an audit into the allocation of funds available under the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002*, administered by the Attorney General's Department.

As outlined by section 298 of the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002*, confiscated proceeds of crime can be re-invested in programs for relevant purposes, including crime prevention and law enforcement. This included the Safer Communities Fund provided grants to boost the efforts of local councils and community organisations to address crime and anti-social behaviour by funding crime prevention initiatives. This fund has now ended.

Your office published an Audit Report of the Proceeds of Crime in March 2017, when the scheme was under the policy administration of the Department of Home Affairs. You concluded that "*The Attorney-General's Department has established effective processes to identify the possible use of funds from the Confiscated Assets Account.*"<sup>i</sup>

You further note that *“Significant funding has also been approved for non-government, community organisation and local council projects, with the New South Wales, Victorian and Queensland police forces also receiving funding.”*<sup>ii</sup>

However, a machinery of government change on 1 July 2022 means the administration and management of funds from this act are now under the purview of the Attorney-General’s Department.

Since this machinery of government change, there does not appear to be any clear and publicly available way to identify how the funds have been disbursed or accounted for and how communities can continue to benefit from initiatives it can potentially fund across Australia. There have been no media releases from the current government on the fund’s use, nor is there any easily accessible way for the public, particularly community groups, to inquire about the use of the funds. This includes groups that previously received grants from the Safer Communities Fund.

I respectfully request that you conduct an audit of this program to provide an independent assessment of its administration and distribution of funds, in particular since the machinery of government change to the Attorney-General’s department in 2022.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zali Steggall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

**Zali Steggall OAM, MP**  
**Federal Member for Warringah**

---

<sup>i</sup> The Auditor-General, ANAO Report No.43 2016–17, Performance Audit, Proceeds of Crime (<https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/proceeds-crime>), page 9.

<sup>ii</sup> The Auditor-General, ANAO Report No.43 2016–17, Performance Audit, Proceeds of Crime (<https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/proceeds-crime>), page 9.