In the public policy arena, accounting has managed to sustain its identity as a neutral, bipartisan tool for rational policy making. Indeed, policy makers are increasingly reliant on accounting information to judge the performance of current policies, and make determinations about the potential of future policy. As fiscally constrained governments at all levels are looking for ways to make the 'tax dollar' go further they have amplified their interest in the kinds of measurements that accountants and accounting practices can provide to optimise their decision making process.

Whilst accounting information can provide useful information for policy related decisions, its political and ideological potency is often ignored.

In this lecture, our expert presenter will by exploring the ways that accounting influences the public policy options and outcomes. She will argue that the increased reliance on accounting information promotes a view of the policy maker as rational and apolitical, devoid of the contaminants of 'real' politics. Drawing on her extensive knowledge of prisons and immigration detention within Australia, Jane will discuss the political nature of accounting information. She will offer some reasons why a more substantive interrogation of accounting, not just at the level of the numbers, but also as a political activity, may help produce better policy outcomes.
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Kate Stanton Memorial Lecture
‘The political potency of accounting – the influence of accounting on public policy’

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