

# Management and accountability



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## Highlights for 2004–05

- During 2004–05 the number of employees on Australian Workplace Agreements rose from 1008 to 1596; this now represents 55.6 per cent of staff.
- The department implemented tools and support to improve integration of business and workforce planning.
- A comprehensive orientation process was developed, including tailored orientation sessions to welcome new employees following the machinery of government changes.
- The department launched its Maturing Workforce Strategy, outlining support for its managers and mature age employees.
- Innovative recruitment processes, including pre-application information sessions and targeted promotional activities, were undertaken.
- Staff transferring under the machinery of government changes received CD-ROM information products covering the transfer arrangements.
- Comcover listed the department in the ‘Top 10 agencies’ for risk management.
- Despite significant organisational changes—including an increase in total funds managed, from \$1.9 billion in 2003–04 to \$17.6 billion in 2004–05—the department continued its record of early finalisation and sign-off of its financial statements.
- The department’s IT security initiatives—such as the smart card system, smart token remote access and the Job Network identity management system—are seen as leading edge and have aroused interest in other departments, which have approached the department to learn about the initiatives.
- Despite a substantial increase in ministerial correspondence—from 3793 items in 2003–04 to 6461 in 2004–05—the department maintained its performance in meeting its timeliness target. At the same time, ministerial satisfaction with briefing papers rose from 3.5 (on a scale of 1 to 5) in 2003–04 to 4.3 in 2004–05.

# Corporate governance

The Management Board is the department's peak decision-making body; it has five subcommittees and meets weekly. At 30 June 2005 its membership was as follows:

- Peter Boxall—Secretary (Chair)
- Malisa Golightly—Deputy Secretary, Employment
- Finn Pratt—Deputy Secretary, Workplace Relations
- Bob Correll—Deputy Secretary, Workforce Participation
- Jeremy O'Sullivan—General Manager, Corporate
- Vanessa Graham—Chief Financial Officer.

The Secretary's Executive Officer provides secretariat support to the Management Board. The board's role is to provide active and visible strategic leadership to the department. It is responsible for setting overall directions and ensuring that the department's structure, culture and resources are aligned to meet the Government's priorities and agreed outcomes and outputs. To achieve this, the board does the following:

- formulates and communicates the strategic directions and priorities for policy, programme management, service delivery and performance
- allocates resources and plans capabilities to meet the department's current and future priorities
- sponsors good governance designed to promote high standards of professional and ethical conduct, financial accountability, and prudent management of risk
- upholds, demonstrates and promotes the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct, as well as departmental values
- generates a workplace environment marked by practical commitment to developing and harnessing people's diverse skills, open communication, and high levels of collaboration.

As the Chief Executive Officer, the Secretary is responsible for overall leadership of the department and for shaping its future. He determines priorities and appropriate resource allocation for delivering organisational performance and leading important initiatives.

The Secretary is accountable to the portfolio Ministers for the management and sound governance of the department and for advising and helping the Ministers fulfil their obligations to Parliament. He upholds and promotes the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct and performs his duties as Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*. He is also responsible for managing the relationship with portfolio agency heads and for setting portfolio priority and coordination matters.

The Deputy Secretaries do the following:

- coordinate effective delivery of each of the department's three outcomes and ensure that a strategic approach is taken across the different areas that contribute to those outcomes
- oversee and guide the groups and officers within their areas of responsibility

- communicate the Management Board’s expectations to groups and officers, help shape strategic advice, and report to the board on developments
- champion effective corporate leadership and management, focusing on particular facets of resource management
- provide support to the Secretary as required.

The Deputy Secretaries are also group managers’ primary contact point for personnel, resource and management concerns that need to be raised with the Management Board.

The Chief Financial Officer has the following duties:

- provide to key stakeholders strategic direction and advice on optimal use of financial resources to meet the department’s goals
- provide value-added financial information that supports decision making
- take responsibility for the department’s financial management framework, financial planning, monitoring, reporting, business systems and record keeping, to increase the consistency, accuracy and reliability of information
- ensure that the department meets its financial management, legislative, budget and reporting obligations.

The General Manager Corporate ensures an integrated approach to corporate matters, formulates the department’s corporate strategy, provides support services across the department, and has overall management of state and territory offices in conjunction with the Deputy Secretaries.

## Management Board subcommittees

Five Management Board subcommittees have decision-making roles in areas of strategic importance within the department, as follows.

### The Audit Subcommittee

The Audit Subcommittee is responsible for providing independent assurance to the Secretary and Management Board on the appropriateness of the department’s accountability and control framework—particularly those aspects relating to the proper use of Commonwealth resources, management of risks, fraud control, and the audit framework. At 30 June 2005 there were six members of the subcommittee:

- Malisa Golightly (Chair)
- Vanessa Graham
- Steve Kibble
- Michael Maynard
- Jenny Morrison (external member)
- Dianne Fletcher (Secretariat).

## The Ethics Subcommittee

The Ethics Subcommittee acts as a reference committee for high-level ethical matters facing the department. At 30 June 2005 it had eight members:

- Peter Boxall (Chair)
- Craig Symon
- Malisa Golightly
- James Smythe
- Michael Manthorpe
- Anya Moore
- Serena Wilson
- Simon Gotzinger (Secretariat).

## The IT Subcommittee

The IT Subcommittee oversees strategic matters relating to information and communication technology in the department, promotes awareness of and builds employee capabilities for the effective use of ICT in improving business performance, and coordinates and monitors the department's annual ICT work programme. At 30 June 2005 the committee had seven members:

- Bob Correll (Chair)
- John Burston
- Vanessa Graham
- Jenet Connell
- Darren Hooper
- Bruce Whittingham
- Glen Wareing (Secretariat).

## The People and Leadership Subcommittee

The People and Leadership Subcommittee provides advice to the Management Board and Corporate on the strategic direction for people management, leadership development and workforce capability in the department. At 30 June 2005 the subcommittee had eight members:

- John Burston (Chair)
- Craig Symon
- Su Kearns
- Alison Stanley
- Nicky Govan
- Brian Quade
- Diane Merryfull
- Anya Moore (Secretariat).

## The Remuneration Subcommittee

The Remuneration Subcommittee sets the parameters for remuneration within the department, including Australian Workplace Agreements and the Certified Agreement. The subcommittee endorses recommendations for salary and employment conditions for AWAs and the Certified Agreement. At 30 June 2005 it had eight members:

- Peter Boxall (Chair)
- Bob Correll
- Finn Pratt
- Malisa Golightly
- Vanessa Graham (ex officio)
- Jeremy O’Sullivan (ex officio)
- John Burston (ex officio)
- Anya Moore (Secretariat).

## The Corporate Leadership Committee

Although not a formal subcommittee of Management Board, the Corporate Leadership Committee—comprising the Secretary, the Deputy Secretaries and all group managers—considers and advises on policy, management and performance matters of department-wide and strategic significance.

## The Service Charter

The department’s Service Charter explains the services and standards of service that people who deal with the department can expect and the ways they can help the department improve its service. Codes of practice, codes of conduct, service guarantees and memoranda of understanding are used to ensure that the department’s contracted service providers meet these standards; these documents are available to the public through the Workplace website <<http://www.workplace.gov.au>>.

The Service Charter is being revised to reflect the new business resulting from the 2004–05 machinery of government changes. The revised charter is to be published in August 2005.

Details of contact points and how to provide feedback are a feature of the Service Charter. Telephone feedback contacts, as well as postal addresses and web addresses, are given for both employment and workplace relations services. The revised charter will also provide email contacts. For particulars, see the stakeholder feedback outlined under output groups in Part 2 of this annual report.

## The Commonwealth Disability Strategy

The transfer of responsibility for various disability services from the Department of Family and Community Services to the department in 2004–05 provided the opportunity to improve and mobilise all employment services in Australia, to help people with a disability who want to work, and are able to work, to gain employment.

Among the strategies the department uses to increase the access to and participation of people with a disability in the department's services are the following:

- initiating projects that target the needs of particular groups of people with a disability
- launching JobAble—an online information resource about employment for people with a disability
- establishing an Employer Roundtable to develop an action plan to increase employers' demand for people with a disability
- consulting people with a disability and their advocates in order to better tailor programmes to meet individual needs
- consulting stakeholders—such as the National Employment Services Association and Job Network members—in order to identify ways of strengthening services for job seekers with a disability
- continuing to give special consideration to people with a disability through ongoing enhancement of the *Active Participation Model*
- providing, for employers and employees, information on regulations and compliance in accessible formats, through
  - internet sites
  - portals
  - touch-screen kiosks
  - telephone services
  - fact sheets
  - pamphlets
  - information seminars
  - workplace visits
- developing better practice models that can be used to improve employment outcomes on a broader scale—such as the Willing and Able Mentoring Programme and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Victoria projects
- ensuring that service providers delivering employment-related services comply with the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the relevant statutes, regulations, by-laws and requirements of their state, territory and local authorities
- providing complaint and grievance mechanisms through which people and employees can express concerns.

Appendix 4 provides an assessment of the department's performance in implementing the Commonwealth Disability Strategy.

# People

## Human resources initiatives

During 2004–05 the Human Resources Branch embarked on a number of initiatives to improve management of the department’s most valuable resource—people—and to increase the effectiveness of the HR function in helping managers develop their people. Among these initiatives were the following:

- developing the Mature Age Strategy
- conducting a client satisfaction survey with a view to improving the HR services offered to staff
- ongoing monitoring and review of a range of HR benchmarks—including voluntary separation, unscheduled absence, investment in learning and development, and the number of responses per recruitment activity. The benchmarks offer the department the opportunity to monitor possible problems and develop solutions
- introducing an improved orientation site and face-to-face orientation sessions in the national office to enhance the experience of joining the department
- reviewing critical strategies—such as the Workplace Diversity Strategy and the Indigenous Australian Recruitment and Career Development Strategy—that will guide the department’s work into the future
- reviewing remuneration for all employees on Australian Workplace Agreements, to provide competitive and targeted remuneration arrangements.

## Employment arrangements

### The Certified Agreement

The department’s Certified Agreement under s. 170LJ of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* reached its nominal expiry date on 31 December 2004. The department has been consulting with all eligible employees, the Community and Public Sector Union, and the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance to develop a successor agreement under s. 170LJ of the Act.

### Australian Workplace Agreements

Australian Workplace Agreements are offered to all departmental employees, regardless of classification level. As from April 2005, all engagements to the department are made on the condition that the employee enters into an AWA. Current Australian Public Service employees not wishing to enter into an AWA are covered by the Certified Agreement.

AWAs provide opportunities for employees to individually tailor a remuneration and employment conditions package that is consistent with the value the department places on the employee’s skills, knowledge and other attributes. Meaningful performance bonuses

are available where an employee has met relevant performance standards, as described in the department's Performance Agreement Scheme. The AWA process is managed with the assistance of a sophisticated online system.

There has been a big increase in the number of employees who have an AWA since the agreements were first offered, in 2002. At 30 June 2004 there were 1008 employees with AWAs; this compares with 248 in 2001–02. At 30 June 2005 there were 1596 employees with AWAs—55.6 per cent of all staff.

## Capability development

### Leadership programmes

Through focused leadership development programmes, the department maintained its focus on capability development and succession management during 2004–05. Two internally coordinated programmes assisted in the development of employees by blending organisational capability development needs with the developmental requirements of people:

- the Executive Leadership Programme
- the Middle Management Leadership Development Programme.

December 2004 saw the completion of the first full year of the Executive Leadership Programme and the start of the second year, which 25 employees from APS Level 6 to SES Band 1 began. The programme will run again during 2005–06. The highly successful Middle Management Leadership Development Programme also continued throughout the year, helping APS 6 and Executive Level 1 employees develop their management skills and techniques.

In addition, the department participated in various private and publicly run initiatives, among them the Australian and New Zealand School of Government's Executive Masters and Executive Fellows Programmes and the Australian Public Service Commission's Career Development Assessment Centres.

The department also started a competitive tendering process for the delivery of a range of leadership and management development programmes. It is expected that these programmes will commence delivery during 2005–06.

Additionally, the department finalised its mentoring programme framework during 2004–05 and will begin a formal pilot of it during 2005–06.

## Staffing profile

Appendix 6 provides details of the department's staffing profile.

## Workforce planning

In late 2004 the department reviewed progress with the integration of business and workforce planning. As a consequence, in early 2005 it implemented changes to the tools and support available to managers, to allow for improvements to planning processes. The results will be monitored into 2005–06.

During the reporting year the department took on a large number of staff as a result of three machinery of government changes. Two hundred and fifty-four staff were transferred to the department from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services on 1 July 2004; 321 staff were transferred from the Department of Family and Community Services on 3 December 2004; and 94 staff were transferred from the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission on 7 February 2005. The transfer of the AT SIS and FaCS staff resulted in the creation of a number of remote locality offices, and the department's state officers made considerable efforts to plan for ongoing workforce requirements in these areas.

On 24 March 2005, 53 staff transferred to Indigenous Business Australia under machinery of government changes.

The department continued to experience increased demand for workforce metrics to assist with planning and decision making, and this demand was met by the Human Resources Branch. For example, rates of unscheduled absenteeism in the department have been monitored. The absence rate for the 2005 March quarter was 3.37 per cent, a decrease from 3.43 per cent for the same quarter in 2004. The APS benchmark set by infoHRM for the Federal Government Group in 2005 is approximately 4.24 per cent, so the department's performance is ahead of this benchmark.

Further improvements were made to reporting tools for managers, such as managers' reports providing live data on employee management. These include individual reports on performance bonus amounts; employees on Australian Workplace Agreements and the Certified Agreement; unscheduled absences, annual, personal and unapproved absences; and reports on performance agreements and ratings.

## Attraction and retention

### Recruitment

The increase in responsibilities following the machinery of government changes in 2004–05 led to an increase in the breadth and depth of capabilities required across the department. This is expected to continue in 2005–06.

The department began a range of recruitment processes designed to attract and retain high-quality people to meet this demand. Initiatives such as pre-application information sessions and targeted promotional activities have produced encouraging results, increasing the department's visibility in the community and highlighting the department as an employer of choice.

The department continued to augment selection skills throughout the organisation by regularly offering Selection Advisory Committee training. The proportion of completed

selection exercises that meet the department's time-to-hire benchmark continued to grow in 2004–05. An evaluation of recruitment and selection practices in March 2005 showed steady improvements over most aspects, compared with a similar evaluation carried out nine months previously.

During 2004–05 the department introduced a comprehensive orientation process, which includes a range of delivery methods, such as formal face-to-face orientation sessions. These sessions were further tailored to welcome employees new to the department following the machinery of government changes.

The department also tackled the need for high-quality employees by expanding the graduate recruitment processes and intake. As a result, graduate intake numbers are expected to increase from 67 in 2005 to over 130 in 2006.

### The graduate programme

In 2004–05 the department recruited 67 graduates from four specialist streams (accounting, law, information technology and economics), a generalist stream and an Indigenous stream. Graduates participated in a comprehensive 10-month programme of work placements, on-the-job development and training. The department again participated in the Association for International Exchange of Students in Economics and Commerce, hosting graduates from Sweden, Holland and Brazil; for the first time, an employee of the department also participated in an AIESEC exchange to India.

### Workplace diversity

There were considerable challenges for the department in 2004–05, with extra programmes being transferred to it as a result of the machinery of government changes. Consequently, the department embarked on a renewed campaign advocating itself as an employer of choice for all Australians through a host of initiatives designed to improve the department's appreciation of a diverse workforce.

### The Maturing Workforce Strategy 2004–2006

In September 2004 the department launched its Maturing Workforce Strategy 2004–2006. Recognising the wealth of experience, skills and knowledge mature age employees bring to their work, the strategy outlines how the department is supporting its managers and mature age employees to shape the workforce for sustained organisational performance.

The strategy consists of a number of initiatives to be introduced during the coming two years, primarily targeting the department's managers and mature age employees. The initiatives are designed to respond to the challenges and choices facing the department in integrating business and workforce planning.

### A disability strategy: future opportunities

The department values the role people with a disability play in the department. As a result, it has made the development of a disability strategy to attract people with a disability to the department a priority for 2005–06.

## Review of the Workplace Diversity Strategy

In May 2005, following a review of the Workplace Diversity Strategy 2002–2005, the Management Board endorsed a successor Workplace Diversity Strategy 2005–2007. The new strategy will be launched in the second half of 2005; it will provide a more streamlined framework for encouraging best-practice management within the department.

Central to effective management of the successor strategy is the Implementation Plan, which will provide shared responsibility between management and staff to ensure optimal workplace diversity advocacy.

A revised Workplace Harassment Policy was released in December 2004. It was developed with the support of equity and diversity contact officers and group and state and territory managers to provide a straightforward, practical policy for employees, managers and contact officers alike.

## The equity and diversity network

The department's former workplace harassment contact officer and diversity officer roles have been combined into the new role of equity and diversity officers. These officers provide the department with a trained support network for both staff and managers in meeting the obligation to provide a supportive work environment.

Training for equity and diversity officers continued throughout 2004–05, with a national meeting of all such officers taking place in Canberra in September 2004.

## Employee forums

In 2004–05 the department supported two important employee forums:

- the Women's Forum
- the Indigenous Staff Network.

The Women's Forum continues to provide an informal mechanism for discussion on matters of concern to women in the department and to offer networking opportunities for them. It also provides input into corporate activities, policies and proposals that affect women in the department.

Acceptance of the Indigenous Staff Network as a formal body has provided an unprecedented opportunity for management and Indigenous Australian staff to pursue the commitment to marketing the department as an employer of choice for Indigenous Australians.

## The Indigenous Australian Recruitment and Career Development Strategy 2005–2007

A review and evaluation of the Indigenous Australian Recruitment and Career Development Strategy 2002–2007 was conducted in October 2004, and a replacement strategy for 2005–2007 was endorsed by the Management Board in April 2005. The replacement strategy has four objectives:

- cultural awareness
- recruitment
- retention
- development.

### Identified Positions

Identified Positions recruitment was also reviewed; a replacement guide now gives the department more flexible options in filling Identified Positions.

### The National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee

The department again supported the annual recognition of excellence in the provision of policy advice and programme management and client support at a formal NAIDOC awards ceremony in July 2004. There were four award categories:

- implementation of the department's Indigenous Australian Recruitment and Career Development Strategy 2005–2007
- employers and service providers who made a significant contribution to Indigenous employment
- implementation of the Indigenous Employment Policy by staff
- innovation in the provision of services to Indigenous Australians.

### The Women's Forum

As noted, the Women's Forum promotes women's interests in the department, provides opportunities for networking, and aims to enhance the career and personal growth paths of women. During 2004–05 the forum achieved its objectives by providing training courses and career development seminars for members, as well as arranging social activities and fundraising events.

The forum hosted an International Interview Skills Women's Day event, with prominent local women as keynote speakers and a number of smaller scale seminars examining subjects such as being a 'high performer' in the department, along with showcasing the careers of senior female public servants. The forum also held seminars on nutrition, health and wellbeing and provided workshops on car maintenance. Among other training courses provided to members were interview skills, writing skills for job applications and selection criteria, and women in leadership and career planning.

Further, the forum participated in fundraising for breast cancer by promoting Pink Ribbon Day; it raised \$1200 and ran a number of social functions at which members could meet and network.

The Women's Forum will continue to build on its success in 2005–06.

## Occupational health and safety

### Health, safety and rehabilitation targets

The department remains committed to the four national health, safety and rehabilitation targets set by Comcare and the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission:

- reduce workplace injuries
- no traumatic workplace fatalities
- reduce the average weeks-lost time due to injury
- reduce the average weeks taken for return-to-work activity to commence by 30 June 2012.

These targets are part of the department's Statement of Commitment.

### The occupational health and safety audit

During May 2005 International Standards Certification Pty Ltd conducted an occupational health and safety audit of the department under the self-audit status conferred by the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission in the following locations:

- the state office in Brisbane and the regional office in Townsville, Queensland
- the Employment Business Services Group, Canberra
- the Labour Market Strategies Group, Canberra
- IT Services Group, Canberra.

The International Standards Certification audit outcomes reflect the effective systems in operation to manage health and safety at these locations, which have achieved the standard required for SafetyMAP certification and have received their certificates. The audit report commended Townsville for its desktop shortcut that opens to occupational health and safety hotlinks. Emergency management was also noted as a highlight.

The department's occupational health and safety International Standards Certification audit was renewed by Comcare for a further two years.

During the reporting year one corporate corrective action report was issued in relation to new equipment not being tagged with the date it was put into service. A process has been implemented to ensure that such tagging occurs.

### The National Health and Safety Subcommittee

The National Health and Safety Subcommittee met four times during 2004–05, reviewing a number of guidelines, including those relating to smoking in the workplace, communicable diseases, and background noise. New guidelines for the use of kitchens were approved.

Negotiation on the occupational health and safety policy and agreement continues with the Community and Public Sector Union.

The department received no provisional improvement notices during 2004–05, and no dangerous occurrences were reported to Comcare.

### Occupational health and safety online training

Occupational health and safety online training has been included as part of the department's orientation procedures, and it is now a requirement that new employees undergo this training within a month of starting with the department. Current employees also received the training in 2004–05.

It is mandatory that performance agreements contain occupational health and safety performance indicators for all employees.

### Health weeks

Swing into Spring Health Weeks were held in August, September and October 2004. The programme offered information sessions, seminars and classes on a wide variety of aspects of health, among them a presentation from a dietitian, tai chi, Fit to Manage, back care, yogalates and work–life balance.

The Wellness for Winter Health programme was presented in June 2005. Sessions on Fit to Manage, the Alexander technique and depression were offered to all staff members.

### Workstation assessments

Workstation assessments continue to be available for all employees. The department's *Fit for work* video now has captions for employees who are hearing impaired. All new employees are encouraged to view the video, to help them set up their workstation properly.

### Internal communications

The department's primary channels for delivering messages to employees are the intranet and on-demand video streaming to desktop personal computers:

- Whole-of-department information continued to be delivered via the intranet, using national and state and territory news sites, an electronic staff newsletter, a departmental calendar and the Management Board bulletin.
- Video on-demand broadcasts kept employees up to date with policy initiatives in the portfolio—for example, the launch of the Maturing Workforce Strategy 2004–2006. Employees were also able to view House of Representatives, Senate and Senate committee hearings broadcasts via their desktop personal computers.
- New departmental employees transferring from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services and the Department of Family and Community Services under the machinery of government changes received CD-ROM information products covering the transfer arrangements.

- Existing departmental employees were kept informed of Certified Agreement negotiations and occupational health and safety matters via a mix of intranet notices and streaming video productions.
- Internal communications were enhanced by video coverage of departmental activities such as the Secretary’s awards, the NAIDOC awards, and major public events such as the annual national Work for the Dole, Work and Family, and Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Employment awards. Improvements in technology and the department’s video-streaming platform gave state-and territory-based employees improved viewing capacity.

## Outlook for 2005–06: people

In keeping with its People and Leadership Statement, the department will continue to develop its leaders and its workforce. The priority in 2005–06 will be managing the workforce for sustainability, high performance and growth. The following will be areas of focus:

- The ever-increasing demand for people requires the department to take a strategic view of recruitment and retention. It will seek innovative ways to both attract and retain; this could involve a complete reorientation of how it approaches the labour market.
- The department’s workforce must be as diverse as the Australian population. There will be a continued focus on increasing the department’s attraction to workers of all ages, to workers with a disability, and to workers of culturally diverse background.
- Leadership remains a priority. Human Resources will implement a new suite of leadership training for staff from APS 4 through to the Senior Executive Service, with a focus on preparing current staff for the challenges of leading into the future. Human Resources will also provide ongoing development opportunities for senior leaders through a reinvigoration of support and development for the Senior Executive Service.
- It is vital to gain an understanding of the workforce and why employees remain with or decide to leave the department. Emphasis on workforce planning and its integration into the business planning cycle will continue. Collection of data from people through targeted exit interviews will be increased.
- Reward strategies will be continually monitored to ensure alignment with market forces.

# Internal controls

## Internal Audit

During 2004–05 Internal Audit continued to help the department achieve its objectives by providing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. The 2004–05 Annual Audit Work Plan was originally designed to identify potential events that could impede the department’s achievement of successful outcomes. As a result of the machinery of government changes, the Annual Audit Work Plan was revised throughout the year to add a number of audits to

cover new portfolio responsibilities. The scope of audit output for the work plan was further broadened to incorporate the increased responsibility for employment programmes and Commonwealth outlays.

Internal Audit continued developing its professional framework and in-house audit capability, which included preparing a graduate and entry-level recruitment strategy. This proved successful in attracting high-calibre entry-level staff to the audit function and was complemented by co-sourcing arrangements through a panel of providers.

The Audit Subcommittee, which met eight times during 2004–05, provided to the Management Board independent assurance of the appropriateness of the department’s accountability and control framework. A particular focus was the proper use of Australian government resources, management of risks, fraud control and the audit framework. The subcommittee fulfilled its role in a number of ways:

- monitoring compliance with all legislative and other obligations relating to financial management—including the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* and the *Auditor-General Act 1997*
- advising the Secretary on whether the annual financial statements represent a true and fair view of the department’s financial management
- approving, monitoring and reporting on the Internal Audit Annual Audit Work Plan
- reviewing all Australian National Audit Office and Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programmes) activity undertaken in or associated with the portfolio
- monitoring the department’s fraud control policy
- improving the effectiveness of the internal audit function.

The 2004–05 Annual Audit Work Plan included reviews of information technology, contract management arrangements, procurement, corporate and enabling service activities. The following activities were reviewed:

- contract management—a review of the effectiveness of the National Contract Management Framework within Job Network on a national level
- travel card and human resources procedures—a review to examine compliance with relevant guidelines and to provide assurance of the accuracy and completeness of supporting information
- systems under development—ongoing audits of several critical application development projects, including an overall controls assessment of Employment Assistant 3000, the system that supports the management of Employment Services and the General Employee Entitlements and Redundancy Scheme Online
- information technology—a review of the processes and systems used to manage IT systems access for internal staff and external service providers, change and release management, and system access and security
- implementation of Australian National Audit Office recommendations—review of the progress of implementation of the recommendations.

## Risk management

The risk management framework requires that employees document decisions about management of risks, based on the department's level of risk tolerance and the benefits and costs of particular courses of action. Application of a 'top down' (strategic direction from the Management Board) and 'bottom up' (implementation at the operational and tactical levels) strategy achieves organisation-wide risk management and overcomes the effects of management 'silos' through effectively identifying, communicating and managing risk information across the organisation.

Risk management tools developed during 2003–04 were applied in 2004–05 to make it easier for all employees to implement the Chief Executive Instructions, which state that 'prudent risk management is to be a commonplace and continuing activity across the department'.

The organisation-wide risk management approach includes the development of an annual strategic risk profile. The current profile gives priority to managing the potential risks arising from significant levels of new business and staffing as part of an integrated business and risk planning process, in addition to the continuing implementation of the business continuity and disaster recovery plans. The department's principles-based approach to risk management—with primary responsibility for operational risk management residing at the group and state and territory manager level—ensures that business, fraud, procurement, occupational health and safety, and security risks are all fully integrated into the risk planning process.

### CASE STUDY

## Innovative leveraging of technology achieving integrated risk management solutions

Building on its culture of risk management across the organisation, in 2004–05 the department continued its focus on organisation-wide risk management with the innovative leveraging of technology to achieve integrated risk management.

The department has developed risk management information systems representative of public sector best practice in managing risk from the strategic to the tactical levels. These systems have attracted interest and recognition from a range of public sector entities and peak industry bodies—among them the Risk Management Institution of Australasia. The department was the only Commonwealth agency to be a finalist in the 2004 Risk Management Awards in the category of 'Best implementation of risk strategy'.

In 2004–05 the department also gained 'Top 10 agency' status in the annual Comcover risk management benchmarking survey.

## Fraud control

In accordance with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines 2002 and the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, the department had a fraud control plan covering the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2005. The department's management of fraud risks is integrated into its business planning, and the development of the Fraud Control Plan 2003–2005 was informed by fraud risk assessments undertaken by groups and state and territory offices.

During 2004–05 investigations of allegations of fraud against the department—other than investigations of fraud in relation to income support programmes, for which Centrelink undertakes investigations on the department's behalf—were carried out by the trained and accredited departmental investigators in the Fraud and Investigations Team. The investigations were conducted in accordance with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines and the Australian Government Investigation Standards and were carried out independently of the groups in the department that are responsible for the policy and the day-to-day management of departmental programmes and contracts.

The department also promoted fraud prevention awareness and procedures among employees through, for example, the following:

- providing training, including
  - integrity awareness training
  - contract management training
  - specialist training and ongoing professional development training for all employees conducting fraud investigations
- publishing policies and procedures on fraud control, including
  - the *Practical guide to fraud control*
  - the *Fraud Control Plan 2003–2005*
  - the *Email and internet protocol*
  - the *Practical guide to risk management*.

## Ethical standards

The Ethics Subcommittee of the Management Board is responsible for promoting the highest ethical standards in the delivery and management of the department's policies, programmes and services. As well as promoting the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct, the subcommittee provides a forum for discussing and resolving important ethical questions that arise from time to time. It also monitors the department's internal and external investigations into alleged fraud and Code of Conduct investigations and the progress of any subsequent prosecutions.

Guidance on and regular updates of information about ethical behaviour in different operational contexts are provided for employees via regular intranet articles prepared by the Ethics Subcommittee. In 2004–05 these articles covered matters such as managing contracted providers and dealing with conflict of interest, proper use of Commonwealth resources and the caretaker period, fraud control responsibilities, and protection of confidential information.

# Financial management

## Financial performance

The department's financial performance was extremely good in 2004–05, particularly in the light of the numerous machinery of government changes that occurred during the year. The organisation gained 19 additional administered programmes and integrated an additional 640 staff from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services, the Department of Family and Community Services and the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission. This increased the total funds managed by the department from \$1.9 billion in 2003–04 to \$17.6 billion in 2004–05.

Despite the significant organisational changes, the department was able to continue its record of early finalisation and sign-off of unqualified annual financial statements. This necessitated the integration of financial information from a variety of systems across four government agencies and the meeting of both the Australian Equivalent of the International Financial Reporting Standards and restructuring note disclosures required for the year. Finalisation of the financial statements on 19 July 2005 was well ahead of the 30 July 2005 deadline set by the Department of Finance and Administration and reflects a strong commitment across the organisation. It was an excellent achievement.

The department continued to meet its high standards for timely payment to vendors, including small business, reaching 99 per cent payment timeliness by the end of the reporting year.

The machinery of government changes also required a major restructure of the department's capital budget to accommodate the additional staff in the national and state and territory offices and to begin integrating programmes transferred in under the Administrative Arrangements Orders into the department's information systems. This was managed within existing resources by reprioritising the current and forward year capital works schedule.

Work continued on the development of a financial budgeting tool to facilitate compliance with external government budgeting requirements, ensuring compatibility with the new Central Budget Management System to be implemented by the Department of Finance and Administration in 2005–06.

## Competitive tendering and contracting

- The third Employment Services Contract is currently valued at \$3.62 billion over the three years of the contract (1 July 2003 to 30 June 2006). Employment services providers have been contracted to provide services, including Job Network and New Enterprise Incentive Scheme assistance to job seekers.
- Community Work Coordinators have been contracted to manage work experience opportunities for eligible job seekers, mainly through Work for the Dole. This second CWC contract is currently valued at \$684.37 million over the period of the contract (1 July 2002 to 30 June 2006).

- Transition to Work providers are contracted to assist parents, carers and mature age people who are starting work for the first time or are returning to work after an absence of two or more years. The Transition to Work contract is currently valued at \$45.29 million over the period of the contract (1 July 2002 to 30 June 2006).
- The Queensland Department of Industrial Relations Office of Workplace Services is contracted to deliver federal workplace relations inquiry and compliance services under the name of the Office of Workplace Services—Queensland from 1 July 2001 to 31 December 2005 or until a new contract is finalised, whichever occurs first. The contract value in 2004–05 was \$1 001 000.
- The South Australian Department of Administrative and Information Services is contracted to deliver federal workplace relations inquiry and compliance services under the name of the Office of Workplace Services—South Australia from 1 October 2001 to 30 June 2006 or until a new contract is finalised, whichever occurs first. The contract value in 2004–05 was \$446 600.
- The Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources is contracted to deliver federal workplace relations inquiry and compliance services under the name of the Office of Workplace Services—Tasmania from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2006. The contract value in 2004–05 was \$229 680.
- The Western Australian Department of Consumer and Employment Protection is contracted to deliver federal workplace relations inquiry and compliance services under the name of the Office of Workplace Services—Western Australia from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2006. The contract value in 2004–05 was \$329 175.
- The Green Corps contract is currently valued at \$94.451 million over the period of the contract (1 September 2002 to 30 June 2006). A competitive tender exercise will be conducted for Green Corps in 2005–06.
- The Voluntary Work Initiative contract was valued at \$2 556 232 for 2004–05.

## Exempt contracts

The Chief Executive did not exempt any contracts from being published in the *Purchasing and disposal gazette* during the reporting year.

## Purchasing

The department's Corporate Legal Team provides specialist business and legal advice to all areas of the department engaged in procurement. This includes providing procurement and contracting training, contracting templates, and better practice guides on all aspects of the procurement cycle. The team also advises on departmental procurement policy, in accordance with government guidelines.

The department successfully implemented the requirements of the revised Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines by the 1 January 2005 deadline. Procurement policy documents and contracting templates were amended where appropriate, and information sessions detailing the

new requirements were held throughout the department. The department also adopted the full functionality of AusTender, to both streamline administrative processes and enhance good governance.

To assist in the effective monitoring and reporting of the department’s contracting activities, all contracts entered into by the department are recorded in its national Contracts and Indemnities Register. Improvements continue to be made to the register to better meet internal and external reporting obligations. A major review of the register is in progress, to find ways of better integrating this tool into the business planning cycle.

The department’s procurement processes are readily communicated and accessible to small to medium enterprises. The procurement processes do not unfairly discriminate against these enterprises and no action is taken to deliberately exclude them from participating in a procurement process.

## Consultancies

During 2004–05, 78 new consultancy contracts were entered into involving total actual expenditure of \$4 579 464. In addition, 51 ongoing consultancy contracts were active during the 2004–05 year, involving total actual expenditure of \$3 947 807. Appendix 8 provides details of consultancy services.

# Information technology management

## Information strategy and technology management

### The IT Subcommittee

In 2004–05 the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations IT Subcommittee continued to oversee the strategic investments made in information and communications technology solutions to support core business needs. The subcommittee facilitates the alignment of business needs and the development and maintenance of the underpinning information and communications technology environment. As part of its operations during the year, the subcommittee reviewed and endorsed a large number of policy and technical initiatives, among them the following:

- the department's home-based remote access service
- a number of IT-related audits
- security penetration tests
- development of an information and communications technology product and services catalogue
- oversight of many staff transfers resulting from the machinery of government changes
- financial management reports.

### IT customer satisfaction

As part of its commitment to the delivery of a quality service, the IT Services Group conducts benchmarking surveys of the services it provides to clients in the department. These surveys are designed to measure staff perceptions, and the results are useful indicators of satisfaction from the perspective of the general desktop user.

In 2004–05 the levels of satisfaction were similar to those obtained from earlier surveys, and once again there were high levels of participation and feedback. The survey results were overwhelmingly positive, with employees indicating that the levels of service and quality they were receiving from the IT Services Group were of a high standard. It is also noteworthy that the department was performing well against industry standards for IT service delivery and reliability.

### Security

During the reporting year the IT Services Group built on the benefits of the department's smart card security technology. As a result a large number of internal applications and some external applications can be accessed via a 'trust gateway' developed and managed by the IT security team. The trust gateway in the internal network 'knows who we are' and generates special

credentials for presentation to the outside service. All that is needed to access the service is to click on the link. This allows eligible users to sign on to the IT environment once and gain automatic access to approved applications without having to log in each time. This concept, known as ‘single sign-on’, is an important technical achievement.

Other agencies are taking notice of some of the department’s IT security initiatives—for example, the smart card system, the smart token remote access solution, the Job Network identity management system, and the security architecture that holds everything together. Agencies such as the Australian Taxation Office, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources and the Australian Bureau of Statistics approached the department in 2004–05 to learn about these initiatives.

The department once again renewed its security certification with the Defence Signals Directorate. The IT security team gained a Protected-level certification for the department’s internet gateway. This certification recognises the management of the department’s internet gateway as consistent with best practice. Only a handful of Commonwealth agencies achieve the Protected level, which assures the department, its partners and its clients that the internal network and the online applications and data are well protected from external attacks.

To maintain Protected certification, the IT security team continually monitors and checks the internet gateway’s integrity. It must also apply rigorous change management techniques to ensure that the many changes made to the gateway each week do not compromise security and that optimum service continues to be delivered.

### IT financial management

During 2004–05 international accounting standards were adopted throughout the department in the form of the Australian Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards. Adoption of these standards was a transitional step towards general operation under the standards, which take effect in 2005–06. The transition to the standards affected IT financial management in terms of policy change and, in turn, procedural change.

The standards’ definitions and criteria for the capitalisation of development expenditure for intangible assets supersede those that applied to accounting for internally developed software. In response to this, a new internal policy document outlining the practical aspects of the standards policy as they apply to the capitalisation of internally developed software was produced and its policies put into effect.

The standards also define new methodologies for assessing the value of both hardware and software assets for accounting and reporting purposes. They require that assets be reported at their ‘fair’ value, taking into account any impairments resulting from such things as damage or obsolescence. As a result, 2004–05 saw the IT Services Group carry out its first annual impairment test of the department’s entire suite of IT assets.

IT Financial Management approaches 2005–06 confident that the department’s software capitalisation processes and IT asset valuations are compliant with the new standards.

## **Assisting the delivery of the department's business**

### **Supporting machinery of government changes**

A large number of machinery of government changes occurred during 2004–05, resulting in considerable portfolio restructuring. This led to many people joining the department from other portfolios, particularly the Department of Family and Community Services. The IT Services Group worked diligently throughout the year to support these changes. The department had to find additional building space to house the extra staff: this resulted in significant additional IT fit-outs that were successfully dealt with in a very short time.

IT platform services were also extended across Australia to more than 30 sites operated by the Office of Indigenous Policy Co-ordination.

### **IT supporting training**

The feedback from the IT customer satisfaction surveys made it clear that training in the use of software products was important to staff. As a result, the department has given all staff access to SkillPort, an e-learning system that can be accessed from the intranet and allows people to learn at their own pace. SkillPort comes with additional support in the form of Books 24x7, which gives staff access to hundreds of IT-related books.

### **Mobile secure computing**

The department's Remote Access Service has been upgraded to provide a more secure and flexible solution to accessing departmental applications and data via the internet. A smart token is the security device used to authenticate a user's access to the service. The Remote Access Service via a smart token is designed for any computer that has an internet connection and meets a few mandatory software requirements. This gives the department and its clients a secure method of access to resources in the department from virtually anywhere.

### **Support for employment programmes**

In 2004–05 two new IBM mainframes were purchased to ensure that the Welfare to Work reforms are fully supported by a robust IT infrastructure. The new mainframes will each be capable of processing information at the rate of 2669 million instructions per second. They have the power to ensure that the programs developed to deliver the Welfare to Work policies will have an IT platform capable of meeting the demand.

### **Support for workplace relations programmes**

Workplace relations website redevelopment was completed during the reporting year. The IT Services Group delivered an improved look and feel and new ways to navigate through information about the department's main programmes. Although on the surface seeming relatively straightforward, this project kept a medium-sized team busy for over 12 months. It was really two projects in one: a new web design and architecture and a completely new underlying infrastructure.

The new web design makes extensive use of the latest standards. Like any new approach, it was a fairly steep learning curve and presented many hurdles. The department is now using current best practice for web design, and this approach will gradually be applied to all the departmental websites.

Many of the applications received upgrades during the year. Of note is the Workplace Agreements Database II, or WAD II, which was released into production and replaces WAD and WAD Conditions. WageNet received a glowing report in a Melbourne industrial relations newspaper.

# Ministerial and parliamentary services

During 2004–05 the department assisted with the changes to ministerial responsibilities. The first change was on 19 July 2004, when the Hon. Fran Bailey MP replaced the Hon. Mal Brough MP as Minister for Employment Services; the second change followed the machinery of government changes after the federal election on 9 October 2004, when the Hon. Peter Dutton MP was appointed Minister for Workforce Participation.

## Ministerial correspondence

Changes to the portfolio arising from the Administrative Arrangements Orders of 24 June 2004, 26 October 2004 and 16 December 2005 had a significant impact on the volume of ministerial correspondence processed by the department. During the reporting year the department processed 6461 items of ministerial correspondence; this compares with 3793 in 2003–04—an increase of 41 per cent. Table 3.1 shows the department’s performance against its targets for processing responses to ministerial correspondence.

TABLE  
3.1  
■

### PERFORMANCE RESULTS

#### Performance indicators and actual performance: processing responses to ministerial correspondence, 2003–04 and 2004–05

Performance indicator	Target	Result	
		2003–04	2004–05
Correspondence for signature by the Ministers—to be prepared within 10 working days	95%	91%	89%
Correspondence for signature by ministerial advisers or departmental officers—to be prepared within 20 working days	95%	93%	94%

## **Ministerial briefing papers, Question Time briefs, parliamentary questions on notice, and Senate Estimates questions taken on notice**

The department provided its Ministers with 1974 briefing papers and 1193 Question Time briefs during 2004–05. Forty-eight answers to parliamentary questions on notice and 304 answers to questions taken on notice at hearings of the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee (Senate Estimates) were tabled. This was a decrease on 2003–04 and can be attributed to the shortened spring sittings of Parliament after the Government entered the caretaker period. Table 3.2 provides details.

### **Outcome 1: Employment**

During 2004–05 Outcome 1 prepared 340 briefing papers for the Minister, and 22 parliamentary questions on notice were tabled. The outcome processed 1161 items of ministerial correspondence. Comparisons with 2003–04 are not made: the significant changes to the structure of the outcome during the year mean comparisons would not be meaningful.

### **Outcome 2: Workplace relations**

There was a decrease in the number of briefing papers prepared for the Ministers by Outcome 2 during 2004–05: 692 briefs were prepared, compared with 723 in 2003–04. Seven parliamentary questions on notice were tabled, a decrease from 15 in 2003–04. There was an increase of over 100 per cent in the number of items of ministerial correspondence processed during the reporting year—3339 compared with 1617 in 2003–04.

### **Outcome 3: Workforce participation**

Outcome 3 was created as a consequence of the additional functions transferred to the department from the Department of Family and Community Services in October and December 2004. The outcome processed 1236 items of ministerial correspondence and tabled three parliamentary questions on notice during the reporting year.

**TABLE 3.2** ■ **Processing: ministerial correspondence, briefing papers, answers to parliamentary questions on notice (tabled) and Senate Estimates questions taken on notice (tabled), 2003-04 and 2004-05**

Responsible area	Ministerial correspondence		Briefing papers		Answers to parliamentary questions on notice (tabled)		Answers to Senate Estimates questions taken on notice (tabled)	
	2003-04	2004-05	2003-04	2004-05	2003-04	2004-05	2003-04	2004-05
Executive	–	11	11	13	–	–	–	–
Outcome 1	1636	1161	812	340	71	22	115	101
Outcome 2	1617	3339	723	692	16	15	122	58
Outcome 3	n.a.	1236	n.a.	568	n.a.	3	n.a.	35
Corporate	354	504	60	83	15	7	37	54
Financial Management Group	27	30	31	34	–	–	4	5
States and territories	46	66	152	119	–	–	–	–
Agencies	113	114	143	125	3	1	146	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>3793</b>	<b>6461</b>	<b>1932</b>	<b>1974</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>304</b>

n.a. Not available.

Note: Outcome 3 established following changes to the portfolio after the federal election on 9 October 2004.

### Ministerial satisfaction

During 2004-05 the method of measuring ministerial satisfaction was changed from a system where Ministers rated all briefs against three criteria (timeliness, presentation and quality) on a scale of 1 to 5 to a single rating (incorporating all three criteria) on a scale of 1 to 5. Under the new system the average rating of ministerial satisfaction with briefing papers for 2004-05 was 4.3. The average rating for 2003-04 was 3.5, so there was a significant improvement in the level of ministerial satisfaction during the reporting year.

### Outlook for 2005-06

The impact of the machinery of government changes following the October 2004 election is expected to continue during 2005-06, with an increasing volume of ministerial correspondence. Another expected growth area is Senate Estimates questions taken on notice. At the Budget Senate Estimates Hearings in May 2005 the department took over 400 questions on notice.

# External scrutiny

## Complaints to the Ombudsman

In 2004–05 the Ombudsman issued no reports in respect of the department pursuant to s. 15 of the *Ombudsman Act 1976*.

## Reports by the Auditor General

During 2004–05 the Australian National Audit Office tabled in Parliament three reports relating to departmental operations:

- Audit report no. 21 2004–2005, *Audits of the financial statements of Australian government entities for the period ended 30 June 2004*
- Audit report no. 51 2004–2005, *DEWR's oversight of Job Network services to job seekers*
- Audit report no. 56 2004–2005, *Interim phase of the audit of financial statements of general government sector entities for the year ending 30 June 2005*.

The department was also involved in service-wide and cross-agency reviews and surveys conducted by the Australian National Audit Office in respect of the following reports tabled in Parliament:

- Audit report no. 3 2004–2005, *Management of internal audit in Commonwealth organisations*
- Audit report no. 6 2004–2005, *Performance management in the Australian Public Service*
- Audit report no. 11 2004–2005, *Commonwealth entities' foreign exchange risk management*
- Audit report no. 13 2004–2005, *Superannuation payments for independent contractors working for the Australian Government*
- Audit report no. 15 2004–2005, *Financial management of special appropriations*
- Audit report no. 22 2004–2005, *Investment of public funds*
- Audit report no. 46 2004–2005, *Management of trust monies in CAC Act entities*
- Audit report no. 50 2004–2005, *Drought assistance*
- Audit report no. 52 2004–2005, *Legal services arrangements in the Australian Public Service*
- Audit report no. 53 2004–2005, *The Home Ownership Programme*
- Audit report no. 54 2004–2005, *Administration of health care cards*
- Audit report no. 55 2004–2005, *Workforce planning*.

## Parliamentary committee inquiries

During 2004–05 the department appeared before and made submissions to the following inquiries of the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Legislation Committee:

- the Inquiry into the Workplace Relations Amendment (Agreement Validation) Bill 2004—report tabled 29 November 2004
- the Inquiry into the Workplace Relations Amendment (Right of Entry) Bill 2004—report tabled 14 March 2005
- the Inquiry into the Workplace Relations Amendment (Small Business Employment Protection) Bill 2004—report tabled 14 March 2005
- the Inquiry into the Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Amendment (Promoting Safer Workplaces) Bill 2005—report tabled 10 May 2005
- the Inquiry into the Building and Construction Industry Improvement Bill 2005 and the Building and Construction Industry Improvement (Consequential and Transitional) Bill 2005—report tabled 10 May 2005.

In addition, the department appeared before and made a submission to the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee Inquiry into Unfair Dismissal Policy in the Small Business Sector (report tabled 21 June 2005). The department also appeared before the committee for Estimates hearings.

During 2004–05 the department appeared before and made a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce Participation Inquiry into Independent Contracting and Labour Hire Arrangements (report yet to be tabled).

Further, the department appeared before the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce Participation Inquiry into Employment: increasing participation in paid work (report tabled 14 March 2005).

During 2004–05, the department also contributed to a whole of government submission, managed by the Department of Health and Ageing, to the Senate Select Committee on Mental Health (due to report March 2006).

## Discretionary grants

The department administered one discretionary grant programme during the reporting year. The Employment Innovation Fund supports initiatives that aim to resolve employment or labour market-related problems in innovative ways. Fourteen projects were funded, and total expenditure for the year was \$833 703. Descriptions of all projects are on the Workplace website <[www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au)>.

