



Australian Government  
Australian Public Service  
Commission

Australia Public  
Service Commissioner  
Annual Report  
2006–07



incorporating the Annual Report  
of the Merit Protection Commissioner



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ISSN 1032 0350

ISBN 978-0-9803978-1-9

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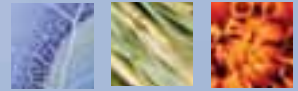
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Part three  
Management and Accountability







## Part three

### MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This part of the annual report sets out the Australian Public Service Commission's approach to corporate governance and the management of resources.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

Achievements in 2006–07 included:

- relocation of the Commission's Canberra office to new premises providing a more attractive, environmentally sustainable, energy efficient and professional workplace for staff including a dedicated venue for the delivery of training programmes and events
- production and release of the Commission's first *Information technology (IT) strategic plan 2006–09*
- implementation of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone services in the new Canberra office
- implementation of protective email marking and SPAM software in all Commission offices
- upgrade of SAP, the Commission's primary financial management system
- development of a database and improved arrangements for keeping the Commission's mailing lists up to date so that clients receive the information they need on time
- development and delivery of processes which provide additional assurance to the Commissioner when completing her annual Certificate of Compliance with the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act) and other elements of the financial framework. The Commission strengthened its financial management framework and practices during 2006–07 and maintained appropriate funding reserves to meet liabilities as and when they fall due
- completing a business continuity plan in the event of an Influenza Pandemic
- establishment of a panel of providers for legal advice
- implementation of a new Collective Agreement and roll-out of new Australian Workplace Agreement (AWA) templates, including offers for all Executive Level (EL1) 1 staff
- release of the Commission's *Reconciliation action plan 2007–10* in May 2007 which aims to influence the implementation of reconciliation both within the Commission and across the Australian Public Service (APS), reflecting the Commission's leadership role in the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians
- delivery of a staff survey in June 2007 with an 83 per cent response rate and high levels of staff satisfaction.

**EXECUTIVE AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

The Public Service Commissioner, Ms Lynelle Briggs, is the agency head and chief executive officer of the the Commission. She heads the Commission’s Executive, which also includes Ms Lynne Tacy, the Deputy Public Service Commissioner and, until his resignation on 14 May 2007, Mr Jeff Lamond PSM, the Merit Protection Commissioner. Mr Boris Budak is the acting Merit Protection Commissioner. A competitive selection process for the office of Merit Protection Commissioner was started following Mr Lamond’s, departure which will inform the Governor-General’s decision on the appointment.

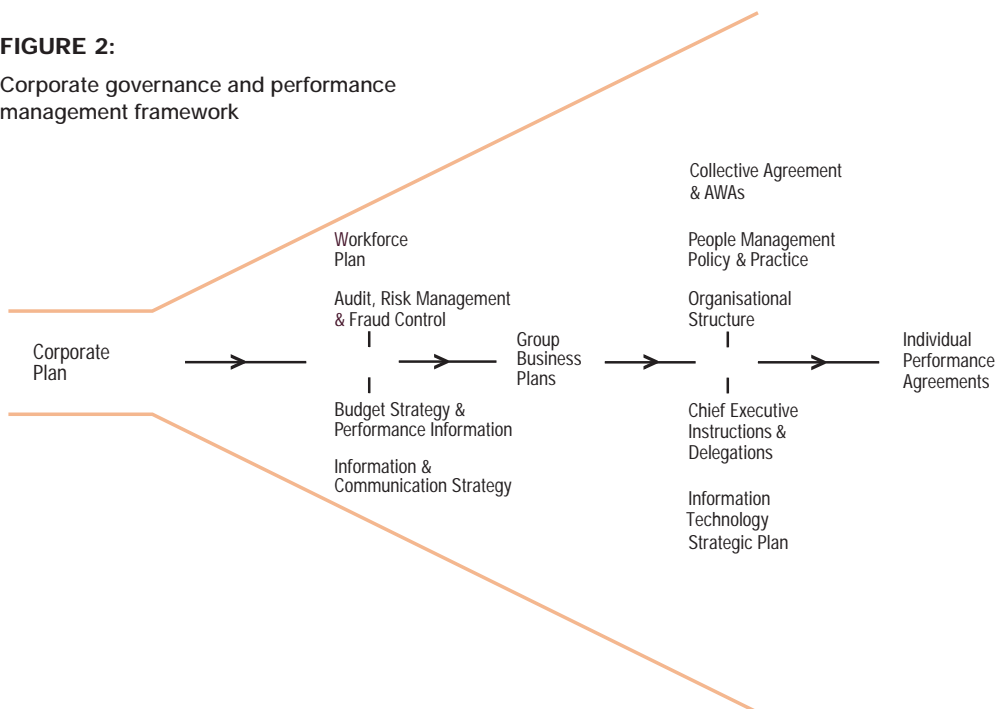
The Commission’s Executive is supported by six Group Managers. During 2006–07, the Commission made two new appointments to its senior executive team. Ms Karin Fisher and Ms Jacqui Curtis were promoted to lead the Corporate and Programmes Groups respectively.

**CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK**

The Commission’s performance expectations and planned use of resources are set out in the portfolio budget statements and corporate plan. These performance parameters and plans cascade down through group business plans to individual performance agreements providing the framework for staff compliance and accountability to take place. Figure 2 shows how the Commission’s corporate governance mechanisms support the Commission’s performance management.

The Commission’s *Corporate plan 2006–07* guided the Commission’s work for the year by setting out the top strategic priorities, other priorities framed against the output structure and the corporate support and culture necessary to deliver those priorities. A copy of the Commission’s *Corporate plan 2007–08* is available at: <http://www.apsc.gov.au/about/corporateplan.htm>

**FIGURE 2:**  
Corporate governance and performance management framework



As part of the Commission's forward planning and development of strategic priorities for 2007–08 a review of the agency's mission statement was conducted in March 2007 and a new simplified mission was implemented—to support a high-performing Australian Public Service.

### Corporate committees

The Executive meets as a strategic decision-making body every fortnight. A number of advisory committees support the Executive in its management role:

- *Commission Management Committee (CMC)*—comprising the Executive, Group Managers and the Adviser to the Merit Protection Commissioner. Meeting weekly, CMC is responsible for:
  - endorsing the corporate plan and corporate policies
  - leading the implementation of strategic priorities
  - reviewing and monitoring performance against budgets and ensuring consistency with overall strategic directions
  - providing a forum for discussing APS policy issues.
- *Audit Committee*—established in accordance with the FMA Act. The committee comprises a chairperson, two senior staff members and an independent external member. Representatives from the Australian National Audit Office attend these meetings as observers, as well as Ernst and Young (the Commission's internal auditors) and the Chief Finance Officer who reports on particular matters. The Audit Committee generally meets four times a year in February, May, August and November. In 2006–07 the
- Merit Protection Commissioner chaired three meetings and the Corporate Group Manager one meeting.
- *Information Technology Advisory Committee*—the committee comprises a chairperson and Corporate, Programmes and Evaluation Group Managers. It is responsible for guiding and managing the Commission's information services and oversees the development and implementation of the Commission's Information Technology (IT) strategy. In 2006–07 the committee was chaired by the Merit Protection Commissioner and met six times.
- *Workplace Relations Committee* is chaired by the Deputy Public Service Commissioner, and comprises three management representatives and five elected staff representatives. It is responsible for advising the Commissioner on the implementation and development of the Commission's collective agreement. The Committee met three times in 2006–07.
- *Occupational Health and Safety Committee* comprises employee and union representatives and is chaired on an annually rotating basis. It is responsible for advising the Commissioner on the administration of the Occupational Health and Safety Agreement between the Commission and the Community and Public Sector Union. The committee met three times in 2006–07.
- *Security Committee*—is chaired by the Corporate Group Manager and comprises the Commission's Security Officer, the Security Officer IT and the Chief Finance Officer. It is responsible for advising the Executive on all security matters. The committee met twice in 2006–07.

### **Internal audit programme**

Ernst and Young completed six audits in 2006–07 related to the 2006–07 audit programme and a further two audits are currently underway. The completed audit reports, which the Audit Committee considered, did not identify any significant or systemic issues. The Commission is implementing the recommendations.

Work started before the end of the financial year to develop the 2007–08 Audit Plan. The Commission's provider of internal audit and related services, Ernst and Young, facilitated a planning session attended by members of the Audit Committee, the Chief Finance Officer and Group Managers.

### **BUSINESS CONTINUITY**

To minimise the impact on clients of any disruption to services following a disaster the Commission's business continuity plan provides practical guidance to ensure continuity of essential services by the Commission.

The major focus of business continuity planning during 2006–07 was preparing for the possibility of an influenza pandemic. A plan for managing this contingency was completed in 2006 and will be tested in 2007–08. The Commission's overall *Business continuity plan* will also be reviewed to take account of the Canberra accommodation move in 2007 and regional office moves in 2008.

### **Risk management and fraud control**

The Commission reviewed its risk register and risk management framework in 2006–07 with the assistance of Comcover. Further work is required in 2007–08 to review these risks.

The Commission's *Fraud control plan 2006–07* and current fraud risk assessment comply with

the *Commonwealth fraud control guidelines* issued in May 2002. The Commission has in place fraud prevention, detection, investigation, reporting and annual fraud data collection procedures and processes that meet the Commission's needs and comply with the guidelines.

The Audit Committee oversees implementation of the *Fraud control plan 2006–07*. The plan is brought to the attention of new staff as part of the Commission's induction process and is available electronically.

### **Ethical standards**

The Commission's Executive supports a workplace culture that gives visible and strong commitment to the APS Values. Activities in 2006–07 included:

- providing information to the Commission's new staff at induction about the APS Values and the Code of Conduct
- scheduling development programmes for all staff which are aimed at making the APS Values and Code of Conduct relevant to their day-to-day work and decision-making and including targeted programmes for staff with management responsibilities
- delivering an information session on the Commission's policies for preventing workplace bullying and harassment
- incorporating references to the relevant APS Values in management policies, guides and instructions released by the Commission during the year
- assessing for behaviour consistent with the APS Values through the Commission's performance appraisal scheme
- dealing promptly with suspected staff misconduct.

The aim of these activities is to build a workplace culture which supports the Commission's governance framework and contributes to stakeholder confidence in the management of the Commission.

## EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

### Court and tribunal decisions

The Federal Magistrates Court decision in *Walworth v Merit Protection Commissioner & Ors* [2007] FMCA 24 (23 February 2007) impacted on the way in which those staff of the Commission who are made available to assist the Merit Protection Commissioner carried out their review of actions functions. The decision and its impact are reported in the Merit Protection Commissioner's Report (see part four).

### Reports by the Auditor-General

There were no reports into the operations of the Commission by the Auditor-General in 2006–07. Reports of general application are considered by the Commission's Audit Committee.

## PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

The Commission's *Corporate plan 2006–07* and *Collective agreement 2006–2009* make commitments to building the Commission's strategic capability through a planned approach to meet the organisation's future workforce

needs. The Commission's workforce initiatives, outlined below, aim to provide a high-performing workforce that can best support the services we deliver to the APS.

### Workforce planning

The Commission's workforce planning strategy sets out the medium to long-term approach to managing workforce issues, in the support of our business planning operations. The strategy will be reviewed in 2007–08 to ensure it remains aligned with the Commission's strategic priorities and to keep it up to date with labour market trends.

At 30 June 2007, the Commission employed 205 staff, excluding casual part-time staff employed in the Commission's regional offices (see output 1–APS policy and employment services) who provide fee-for-service work. Of these 205 staff, 178 were employed on an ongoing basis with the majority of the 205 staff being based in Canberra (80%).

Notable trends in the Commission's staffing figures are:

- a slight workforce increase between June 2005 and June 2006. The proportion of non-ongoing employees declined slightly from 13.9 per cent to 13.2 per cent. The Commission continues to use non-ongoing employees to address staff turnover rates and to enable heightened flexibility in managing the organisation's revenue base

**TABLE 21:**

Commission staff numbers as at, 30 June 2001–07

	June 2001	June 2002	June 2003	June 2004	June 2005	June 2006	June 2007
Ongoing	122	135	159	165	168	167	178
Non-ongoing	36	26	27	25	16	27	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>205</b>

*Note: These figures do not include non-ongoing casual staff employed on fee-for-service work but do include Statutory Office Holders (SOHs). More detailed information about the Commission's workforce is set out in Appendix H.*

- a decrease in the proportion of Executive Level 1 and 2 employees from 46.4 per cent at June 2006 to 42.4 per cent at June 2007. The proportion of APS 1–6 employees increased slightly from 46.9 per cent at June 2006 to 52.2 per cent at June 2007
- the proportion of women working in the Commission has continued to increase, rising from 66.3 per cent of all employees at June 2005 to 69.1 per cent at June 2006 and to 73.7 per cent at June 2007
- part-time employment continues to be dominated by women, although four men took up this employment option in the last year. The level of access to part-time arrangements by men is consistent with total Commission workforce demographics
- the proportion of employees identifying as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent has continued to increase, rising from 4.4 per cent at June 2005 to 4.6 per cent at June 2006 and 4.9 per cent at June 2007
- ten SES staff were employed at 30 June 2007 (5.6 per cent of total ongoing employees). The number of SES employees has reduced by one from 30 June 2006 and includes three AusAid funded staff who are deployed overseas.

The Commission conducted two bulk recruitment campaigns for EL 1 and 2 employees during 2006–07 which aimed to achieve a strong order of merit for filling existing and future job opportunities, and to test the potential of internal candidates against the range of jobs in the Commission. Both rounds received strong applicant fields but the tightening labour market has resulted in the orders of merit being exhausted earlier than expected.

The Commission experienced difficulty in attracting certain skills sets in 2006–07, including: legal services; IT; finance and accounting; policy development; and learning and development.

#### **Graduate and traineeship recruitment**

In January 2007 three graduates, including one Indigenous graduate, started the Commission's graduate development programme. The programme offers a variety of structured learning and development activities, including a Diploma of Government (Management) and access to on-the-job and technical learning and development opportunities.

The Commission continued its traineeship programme, recruiting three Indigenous trainees during the year.

#### **Corporate learning and development**

The 2006–07 corporate learning and development calendar continued the practice of linking Commission, Group and individual capability to organisational performance improvements. The calendar represents a significant investment by the Commission in the development of staff (see Table 22). The calendar's online availability has enabled staff across the Commission to have greater access to upcoming courses and has allowed for constant updating as new courses become available.

In 2006–07 new arrangements were developed to improve access for regional staff to corporately sponsored development opportunities.

The corporate calendar supplements other development opportunities funded by groups.

Corporate training for 2006–07 focused on capability development priorities in the areas of people, performance, project and programme

management and on improving our legal, administrative review, governance and research capacity.

In 2006–07 staff participated in EL and SES residential leadership development programmes as well as programmes targeted at staff with high potential such as the *Executive Masters of Public Administration* from the Australia and New Zealand School of Government and *Career Development Assessment Centres*.

Staff continue to take advantage of the Commission’s *Study encouragement scheme*, which supports study towards qualifications in the fields of public administration, human resource management, learning and development, public policy and governance. The number of staff accessing the *Study encouragement scheme* has remained steady at 11 in 2006–07 after peaking at 14 in 2005–06.

Staff development also occurs through the delivery of *Corporate made easy* and *Good oil* sessions on a range of topics aimed at keeping staff informed about the development of the Commission’s products and services, the roles and responsibilities of various teams, and tools and tips to help them perform effectively in their jobs.

## Health Week

Health Week occurred between 16 and 20 October 2006 and included a variety of activities aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle that can be maintained by staff in the long term.

Activities included:

- physically based activities such as exercise classes, tai chi and yoga
- clinical assessments including health checks and skin checks
- information sessions including men’s and women’s health seminars and a healthy eating presentation.

## Staff Survey

The Commission surveys its staff approximately every two years. Taking account of feedback from staff, the most recent survey was postponed from October 2006 until March 2007 so that implementation would not be delayed by the holiday period. Results were made available to staff in June 2007.

The 2007 survey obtained feedback on our organisational climate and work culture; the quality of our leadership at all levels; how well we communicate internally and with our

**TABLE 22:**

Participation rates in training and development activities, 2000–01 to 2006–07

Participation rates	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
Total staff days	761	562	678	1176	570	420	351
Average days per staff member	4.8	3.5	3.7	6.1	3.1	2.3	1.7
Total cost (\$)	140,000	145,000	247,000	617,000	280,000	175,000	124,000
Average cost per staff member (\$)	886	900	1330	3250	1519	902	605

Note: Figures include indirect costs (e.g. salary during training).

clients; our performance management system; occupational health and safety; the strength of our learning and development strategies; preventing bullying and harassment; and overall satisfaction with working in the Commission. The survey was based on a set of core questions that allow for trend analysis, as well as some new, open-ended questions seeking feedback on a number of issues, including ways of improving the Commission’s products.

The results were very pleasing with a response rate of 83 per cent and between 80–90 per cent of respondents reporting that they:

- are happy with their job
- feel the Commission is a satisfying place to work
- agree that the Commission is an organisation of which they are proud.

**Agreement-making in the Commission**

The Commission provides terms and conditions of employment under either its Collective Agreement (CA) or through Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) with individual employees. As at 30 June 2007, 131 employees were covered by the CA and 73 employees covered by AWAs. The terms and conditions of the Commission’s two statutory office holders are determined by the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service taking into account the advice of the Remuneration Tribunal.

The salary ranges for the Commission’s classification levels are set out in Table 23.

**TABLE 23:**  
Salary ranges, 30 June 2007

Classification	Minimum \$	Maximum \$
APS 1–2	32,957	42,000
APS 3–4	43,865	52,000
APS 5–6	54,207	67,000
EL 1	72,483	89,800
EL 2	83,527	110,865
SES 1	120,000	148,720

*Note: The Commission employs only one SES Band 2 and one SES Band 3 employee and therefore their salaries are not included in this table.*

**Australian Workplace Agreements**

In 2006 the Commission offered AWAs to all EL1 staff as a group. The response was very positive with 53 per cent of EL1 employees covered by an AWA as at 30 June 2007. The take-up by EL1 employees brings the Commission’s proportion of staff covered by an AWA to 35 per cent of the workforce.

Non-salary elements of AWAs cover a range of possible options including: access to performance bonuses; car parking; home access to information technology; mobile phones; annual leave cash out options; business class air travel; and executive lease vehicles.

**Collective Agreement**

The *Australian Public Service Commission collective agreement 2006–2009* (CA) is in its second year of operation after being approved by staff on 20 June 2006.

It is a comprehensive agreement made directly with staff under section 327 of the Workplace Relations Act 1996 and nominally expires in June 2009.

During the year a range of policies were revised to meet commitments in the CA including implementation of new *Study encouragement*

**TABLE 24:**

Performance pay, 2006–07

Classification	No. of staff	No. receiveing	Total payment (\$)	Average payment (\$)	Range (\$)
APS 1–6	91	0	0	N/A	N/A
EL 1	58	3	6333	2111	1500–3000
EL 2	32	14	33,551	2397	1313–4500
SES	11	4	19,247	4812	1247–12000

Note: These amounts represent payments for the performance cycle 2005–06 and were paid in July 2006.

scheme guidelines and revisions to existing: performance appraisal guidelines; work level standards; AWA guidelines; personnel delegations; and leave guidelines to include purchased, paternity and adoption leave.

### Performance management

A feature of the Commission's CA is the performance appraisal scheme that directly links annual assessment of individual performance with remuneration. The scheme integrates corporate, group and individual performance planning, providing a basis for consideration and development of individual needs and where necessary, management of poor performance.

The Commission's scheme provides for annual productivity increases in base pay and depending on performance, the possibility of salary advancement. A similar scheme operates for staff covered by AWAs.

The Commission's CA does not provide for performance bonuses which explains the reduction in payments from 2005–06. During 2006–07 the Commission paid \$59,131 in performance bonuses to 21 employees who were covered by AWAs. Details of payments made to staff are included in Table 24.

### Other people management matters

The Commission conducted an investigation into the conduct of a member of staff under the Commission's procedures for dealing with suspected breaches of the APS Code of Conduct. It was determined that the employee had breached the Code of Conduct and a sanction was imposed. The matter related to inappropriate use of the Commission's IT facilities.

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

### 2006–07 income

The Commission's income for 2006–07 totalled \$39.8 million. Appropriation from government accounted for 51.8 per cent, sales of goods and services accounted for 48 per cent and other income the remaining 0.2 per cent (see Table 25).

**TABLE 25:**

Income sources, 2003–04 to 2006–07

Income source	2003–04 %	2004–05 %	2005–06 %	2006–07 %
Appropriation from Government	57.3	52.8	47.3	51.8
Sale of goods and services	42.6	47.1	52.6	48.0
Other income (e.g. interest and resources received free of charge)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2

### Appropriation funding

Appropriation funding increased from \$18.1 million in 2005–06 to \$20.6 million in 2006–07. Increases in funding were sourced from:

- 2005–06 Portfolio Additional Estimates measure to improve employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Australian Public Service (increase from \$1.2 million in 2005–06 to \$2.6 million in 2006–07) and
- 2006–07 Portfolio Budget Statement measures (\$1.4 million in 2006–07).

### Non-appropriation income

Income from the sale of goods and services in 2006–07 is earned from development programmes (62.0%), employment services (22.8%), international assistance (9.1%), better practice and evaluation (5.9%) and other services (0.2%).

Income from development programmes and employment services amounted to \$16.3 million in 2006–07 and made up 40.9 per

cent of the Commission’s total income from all sources. This income is earned in an open market where agencies have choice about where they source their services and the level of services they acquire. As demand can be volatile, the Commission devotes considerable effort to estimating income, expenditure and cash flows and to monitoring its financial performance during the year.

The Commission has become increasingly dependent on non-appropriation income in recent years as can be observed in Figure 3.

### Operating result 2006–07

The Commission’s operating result for 2006–07 was a surplus of \$2.3 million. The surplus resulted primarily from increased demand for employment services and leadership, learning and development programme delivery.

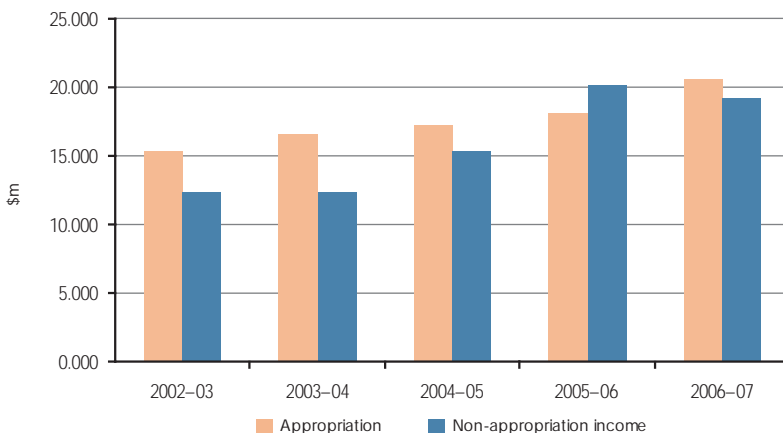
**TABLE 26:**

Operating result, 2003–04 to 2006–07

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
Surplus		\$0.872 m	\$1.134 m	\$2.344 m
Loss	\$1.229 m			

**FIGURE 3:**

Commission income 2002–03 to 2006–07



The 2006–07 operating surplus helps the Commission to rebuild accumulated reserves to levels sufficient to cover liabilities following the significant capital investment required in 2006–07 for the Canberra office relocation.

### Budget outlook

In developing its 2007–08 budget the Commission has continued to adopt a conservative approach with the aim of achieving a balanced outcome in the 2007–08 year and forward estimates.

The Commission is continuing to strengthen its budget and business planning and management practices as funding will continue to be tight and our reliance on income from the sale of goods and services remains high.

The Commission will receive an additional \$0.7 million for measures approved in the 2007–08 Budget. However, total appropriation funding will decrease slightly from 2006–07 by \$0.1 million as funding for previous years' budget measures conclude.

Non-appropriation income is projected to be consistent with 2006–07 levels.

**TABLE 27:**

Total planned budget for 2007–08

Sources of income	Value
Base appropriation funding	\$17.022 m
Investment in programme development	\$0.102 m
Improve employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	\$2.625 m
2007–08 budget measures	\$0.749 m
Total appropriation funding	\$20.498 m
Non-appropriation income	\$18.845 m
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$39.343 m</b>

### CEO Certificate of Compliance

A new requirement starting from the 2006–07 financial year, requires chief executives of FMA Act agencies to provide their portfolio Minister and the Minister for Finance and Administration with an annual certificate (called the Certificate of Compliance) in relation to the financial management and financial sustainability of their agencies.

In response to this the Commission reviewed its existing processes and controls in place to ensure that the Commissioner could have confidence that her employees are complying with the financial management framework. To enable the Commissioner to sign off with reasonable certainty the obligations of Certificate of Compliance, the Commission developed a reporting framework and tools that Group Managers use to review their operations and document instances of non-compliance with relation to the financial management and financial sustainability of their groups. The new reporting framework supports and strengthens existing process and controls which drive robust financial management practices and performance.

### Purchasing

The Commission's purchasing is consistent with the *Commonwealth procurement guidelines – January 2005* (CPG), our Chief Executive's Instructions and operational guidelines.

The Commission uses a devolved procurement model and to ensure performance against core purchasing policies and principles, relevant information is provided to all staff. The Commission has established a framework for managing risks in respect of procurement activities and operational guidelines to support staff assessing risks associated with their projects.

The Commission has published the *Annual procurement plan* on AusTender (as required under the CPG) to facilitate early procurement planning and draw businesses' attention to our planned procurement for the 2007–08 financial year.

### Consultants

During 2006–07, nine new consultancy contracts were entered into involving total actual expenditure of \$168,000. In addition, nine ongoing consultancy contracts were active during the 2006–07 year, involving total actual expenditure of \$368,000.

**TABLE 28:**

Expenditure on consultancy contracts, 2004–05 to 2006–07

	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
Number of new consultancies let	8	16	9
Number of ongoing consultancy contracts that were active	2	4	9
Total actual expenditure on new consultancy contracts \$'000	254	183	168
Total actual expenditure on ongoing consultancy contracts that were active \$'000	231	180	368
Total actual expenditure on all consultancy contracts \$'000	485	363	536

Further information on consultancy services for 2006–07, including details of consultancy contracts over \$10,000 can be found on the Commission's website.

### Competitive tendering and contracting

During the year, the Commission did not undertake any competitive tendering and contracting activities as defined in the *Requirements for Annual reports for departments, executive agencies and FMA Act bodies*.

### Asset management

The Commission manages assets with a gross value of \$8.6 million. The major asset categories are land and buildings (leasehold improvements), infrastructure, plant and equipment and intangible assets (software and intellectual property). These assets are managed by Groups to meet their business needs. The Commission annually reviews its capital budget and plan. As a result a four year capital investment plan is developed from which the Commission manages its future asset purchases and disposals. All assets owned by the Commission, including any IT assets, are subject to an annual stocktake, which is used to update and verify the accuracy of asset records. Assets are depreciated at rates applicable for each asset class, as verified by the ANAO.

### Exempt contracts

Under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act), the Commissioner can issue exemptions from the requirement to publish any contract or standing offer in AusTender on the grounds that it would disclose matters that might normally be exempt from disclosure under the FDI Act. The Commissioner did not issue any such exemptions during 2006–07.

### Discretionary grants

During 2006–07, the Commission did not administer any discretionary grant programmes.

### Legal services

During 2006–07 the Commission, in partnership with the office of the Official Secretary to the Governor General, tendered for a panel of legal services providers. The Australian Government Solicitor and Blake Dawson Waldron were the successful tenderers. Although the Commission's legal services

requirements are relatively small, partnering with another agency ensured a contracting process of interest to potential tenderers and the outcome delivers value for money.

### **Information management**

In September 2006 the Commission released its first *Information technology (IT) strategic plan 2006–09*. The plan defines our IT strategic directions over the period 2006–09 and the actions that will allow the Commission to address the drivers of change and meet our corporate objectives over the next three years, including:

- a secure, robust, flexible and capable IT environment that meets business needs and aligns with Government directions
- a consolidated and integrated information environment where information and data are well managed and easily accessible both internally and externally
- a sound partnership with our internal customers and other agencies for cost effective IT service delivery
- a well governed IT organisation and environment supported by quality processes and standards
- an efficient and innovative use of IT resources.

The Commission has outsourced most of its IT infrastructure support services to Volante Pty Ltd in a group contract with other agencies known as Group 8. Other members of Group 8 include the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Department of the Environment and Water, the Australian Communications and Media Authority, and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. The contract expires in June 2009.

In addition to management of the contract with Volante, the Commission's small in-house

IT team focused its work in 2006–07 primarily on the delivery of the *APSjobs* system (see output 1.2—employment services) and management of the move of the Canberra office to new accommodation, including the introduction of VOIP telephone services. In addition the following projects were delivered within the commission in collaboration with other IT expertise:

- the implementation of protective email marking and SPAM software
- a Wide Area Network performance benchmarking and IT upgrade for the Commission's regional offices
- the upgrade of the Commission's SAP operating system, database and applications
- the establishment of a database to manage the Commission's mailing lists
- the development of an online system to manage bookings for the Commission's Health Week
- implementation of 'Metadata Assistant' to enhance editing, viewing, filing and retrieval of Microsoft Office files
- establishment and co-location of a computer room to house the Commission's servers. with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

### **Communications**

The Commission conducted a small scale review of its Internet in 2006–07, with particular focus on the SES and employment policy and advice pages. The major outcomes of the review were to update the SES pages to improve the usefulness and accessibility of information to SES employees; and to reorganise the employment policy and advice pages to better reflect the information requirements of users accessing the website. These outcomes will be implemented in 2007–08.

In January 2007 the Commission completed a review of its mailing lists and appointed a mailing administrator to operate a new Microsoft Access database, liaise with clients and keep the Commission's mailing lists up to date. The new arrangements have resulted in a substantial decrease in returned mail, helping to ensure that our clients receive the information they need on time.

A new internal communication tool, *Work shorts*, was implemented in 2007 providing a regular programme of short and entertaining seminars, featuring five-minute updates from Commission staff on programmes, projects, new products and internal activities. The seminars have been well received by staff.

#### **Library**

The library provides a comprehensive information research and lending service by developing, managing and maintaining resources to support the work and professional development of staff.

During 2006–07, the library further rationalised the main collection as part of the preparation for the Canberra office relocation in February 2007 and continued to target new acquisitions to high priority areas, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, leadership and capability development, public sector reform, and governance.

#### **OTHER INFORMATION**

##### **New accommodation**

In February 2007 the Commission relocated its national office from the Edmund Barton Building in Barton to new premises at 16 Furzer Street, Phillip.

The accommodation is modern, versatile, secure, ergonomic and provides a functional working environment designed to meet the

Commission's long term accommodation needs. Included is a high quality and professional training centre used for the efficient delivery of the Commission's learning and development programmes (see output 2.2—programme delivery).

The fit-out of the office has proven to be a success with the Commission's staff, clients and stakeholders.

Work has commenced on the proposed relocation of the Commission's Sydney and Perth offices in mid 2007–08.

##### **Security**

Mandatory security requirements for Commonwealth agencies and some best practice features were incorporated into the design and construction of the Commission's Canberra accommodation and have been included in plans for its new offices in Sydney and Perth.

Further work is required to update the Commission's security plan which had been planned for 2006–07 but was not achieved owing to competing priorities during the year. The review is now scheduled for 2007–08.

Security awareness briefings are provided to new staff as part of induction and focus on internal security practices and procedures. Further work is required to evaluate the Commission's security awareness training for all staff.

##### **Australia Day Awards**

The Commission's Australia Day celebrations include the presentation of Australia Day awards to non-SES members of the Commission in recognition of their exceptional contributions to the performance, culture and or identity of the Commission. Generally the awards are restricted to employees who have worked in the Commission for a period of 12 months or more.

## YEAR HIGHLIGHT



### **A NEW ERA FOR THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

After many months of planning, 5 February 2007 marked the Commission's move to its new, environmentally sustainable and energy efficient national office in Woden. The new premises were officially opened on 1 March 2007 by the Hon Joe Hockey MP, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service.

The new premises reflect a modern, professional image for the Commission in supporting a high-performing Australian Public Service.

The new building has been designed to achieve a 4.5 star Australian Building Greenhouse Rating and a 4.0 Green Star Environmental rating. Energy saving initiatives include:

- sensor lights in offices, meeting rooms, kitchens, storage areas etc
- timer controls on supplementary air-conditioning units
- water-saving white goods
- workstations made from recyclable material
- use of multi-functional devices to reduce the number of printers and faxes
- cardboard and paper recycling.

Central to the design of the new accommodation has been a dedicated venue for the delivery of APS-wide training programmes and events. Participants, trainers and staff are able to benefit from the facility's tailored design features and state of the art technology.

The co-location of the training facility within the Commission's national office provides the opportunity for the Commission to monitor more closely the administration and quality of the leadership, learning and development programmes delivered to the APS.

The training facility also provides permanent capacity for displaying the Commission's better practice guides and other publications, as well as information about leadership, learning and development programmes and upcoming events.

Visit <http://www.apsc.gov.au/learn/facilities.htm> for further details.

Contributions in many areas of the Commission were recognised in 2007. Awards, comprising six individual awards and three team awards were presented in January 2007 to:

- Ms Qiumeng Mao, for her professional management of international delegations
- Ms Rachael Shields, for her ongoing commitment to excellence in the graphic design work of the Commission
- Mr Andrew Glenn, for his client focus and high level of professionalism in IT
- Ms Catherine Potter, for her contribution towards the development of information guides targeting the attraction, recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to the Australian Public Service
- Mr Michael Corke, for his work on several special tasks throughout 2006
- Ms Jo Zappia, for her outstanding commitment and dedication to her work and to the clients of the Human Resource and Communications Team
- Public Service Act Review Team (Mr Roger Tarlinton and Mr Richard Collis) for their comprehensive review of the *Public Service Act 1999*
- Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) conference team (Ms Penelope Royston, Ms Theresa Graham and Ms Karen Kentwell) for their excellent organisation of the CAPAM conference
- Panel Implementation Team (Mr David Maybanks, Mr Daniel Florent, Ms Natalie Modric, Ms Susan Kemp, Ms Sandy Newton, Ms Mary Inman, Mr Peter Stanfield,

Ms Rebecca Seevinck, Ms Amanda Taylor, Ms Debbie Phillips, Ms Amy Zhang, Ms Jayne Sutor and Ms Jenny Seymour) for their outstanding commitment to the smooth implementation of new arrangements through the Commission's panel of providers for the delivery of leadership, learning and development services to the APS.

### **Reconciliation action plan**

In May 2007 the Commission released its *Reconciliation action plan 2007–2010*. The plan provides specific, tangible actions to be implemented by the Commission as a way of contributing to the practical process of reconciliation and helping to improve social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Commission recognises that as a central agency involved in development of employees, leaders and the culture of the APS, it is vital that we take a leadership role in reconciliation and influence the implementation of reconciliation both internally and externally across the APS. Further information on the Commission's *Reconciliation action plan 2007–2010* can be found on the Commission's website.

### **Workplace diversity**

The Commission's Workplace Diversity Programme contributes to ensuring the Commission fosters an environment that values diversity of backgrounds and ideas and achieves the creativity and performance that flows from diverse contributions. The programme will be reviewed in 2007–08 and will take into account the Commission's *Reconciliation action plan 2007–2010*.

The Commission's representation of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people born overseas, people born overseas with English not their first language, and people identifying as having a disability are set out in Table 29.

The Commission's representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability compares favourably with APS-wide averages. Historically the Commission has reported annually on employment of these groups as a proportion of all employees (ongoing and non-ongoing), whereas APS-wide employment figures reported in the annual APS Statistical Bulletin report Equal Employment and Opportunity (EEO) status for ongoing employees only. The APS *Statistical Bulletin 2006–07* will be released in December 2007.

### NAIDOC Week

In July 2006 National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week was celebrated throughout the Commission with a range of activities including: a flag raising event at the Edmund Barton Building, a quiz and the screening of films supplied by the Australian Film Commission.

The flag raising event included speeches by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Ms Joanna Hewitt and the Public Service Commissioner, Ms Lynelle Briggs. The event was attended by Ngunnawal elder, Ms Matilda House, and Torres Strait Islander, Mr Benny Hodges, who raised the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags respectively.

A variety of events were organised by regional offices in conjunction with the relevant IAPSEN Steering Committees. In Western Australia the NAIDOC event featured a panel of three inspirational speakers, was attended by 60 employees and commenced with the signing of a commemorative banner painted under the supervision of Ms Charmaine Green, winner of the 2006 NAIDOC poster competition.

**TABLE 29:**

Representation of Equal Employment and Opportunity (EEO) groups as a percentage of staff<sup>1</sup>, 2002–07

EEO Groups	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Women	67.7	68.3	68.4	66.3	69.1	73.7
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	3.7	3.8	3.2	4.3	4.6	4.9
People with disability	3.1	5.4	7.9	9.2	8.2	8.3
Born overseas	16.1	15.1	16.3	20.7	21.1	18.0
Born overseas and English not first language	5.0	7.5	5.3	7.6	7.2	7.3

Note: Further information on the Commission's staffing numbers and equal employment opportunity (EEO) statistics are included in Appendix H.

<sup>1</sup> The figures include ongoing and non-ongoing employees, but exclude casual staff employed on a part-time basis for specific tasks related to employment services provided on a fee-for-service basis by the Commission's regional offices.