



Australian Government
**Australian Public Service
Commission**

*Australian Public Service
Commissioner*
annual report

2007-08

Incorporating the Annual Report of the Merit Protection Commissioner



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Acknowledgements

Lead coordinator: Catherine Adorni-Braccesi

Group Coordinators: Margaret Cahill, Derek Drinkwater, Marlene Hanner, Lisa McKenna, Jane Paingakulam, Daniela Schlesier

Design and typesetting: Sally Huckel

Website design: Andrew Glenn

The background of the page is a light green, semi-transparent image showing a microscopic view of plant cells, likely from a leaf or stem, with distinct cell walls and internal structures. The image is slightly blurred and has a soft, ethereal quality.

Part two
Performance review

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE, 2007-08

| Output | Activity | Quantity | Quality | Budget outcome |
|---|--|----------|---------|----------------|
| 1.0 APS policy and employment services | | | | |
| 1.1 | Advice and support to Minister, Executive and agency heads | ★ | ★ | \$2.262m |
| 1.2 | Employment services | ★★★ | ★ | \$6.783m |
| 1.3 | International assistance and organisations | ★ | ★ | \$2.478m |
| 1.4 | Merit protection and other services | ★ | ☆ | \$2.883m |
| 2.0 Development programmes | | | | |
| 2.1 | Leadership services | ★ | ★ | \$5.027m |
| 2.2 | Programme delivery | ★★★ | ★ | \$9.773m |
| 2.3 | National/international programmes | ★ | ★★★ | \$1.458m |
| 3.0 Better practice and evaluation | | | | |
| 3.1 | Indigenous employment | ★ | ☆ | \$4.886m |
| 3.2 | Promote better practice | ☆ | ★ | \$1.737m |
| 3.3 | Statistical/information services | ★ | ★ | \$1.422m |
| 3.4 | Research and evaluation | ★ | ★ | \$1.522m |

| KEY: | Not achieved | Partly/mostly achieved | Achieved | Exceeded |
|------|--------------|------------------------|----------|----------|
| | ☆ | ☆ | ★ | ★★★ |

OUTPUT 1 APS POLICY AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Output 1 is drawn from the Public Service Commissioner's statutory role as outlined in section 41 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (the Act), in particular her responsibilities to develop, promote, review and evaluate Australian Public Service (APS) employment policies and practices, including the APS Values, Code of Conduct and whistleblowing provisions, and to provide advice and assistance to agency heads on APS employment matters.

This output also relates to the Commission's work in helping governments and organisations in the Asia-Pacific improve public sector governance and performance, and to contribute to international networks.

Additionally, Output 1 is drawn from the statutory responsibilities as outlined in section 16 of the *Public Service Act 1999* to inquire into whistleblower reports. Information on whistleblower reports made to the Merit Protection Commissioner are provided in Part 4.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Commission's achievements under Output 1 were delivered against a background of increased demand for support from the new Government and agencies in dealing with financial and administrative policy. Significant new work was progressed in parallel with a large increase in demand for the Commission to exercise its statutory powers.

Achievements included:

- supported staff transfers resulting from new and restructured agencies through implementation of 34 machinery of government changes while maintaining employment conditions for staff in new agencies
- developed advice and issued guidelines for agencies covering public servants' participation in public information and awareness initiatives
- contributed to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) review of the policy framework for bargaining over remuneration and employment conditions
- developed and implemented policy and guidelines on merit-based selection of APS agency heads and statutory office holders
- developed and launched governance advice for agencies and case studies in *Building better governance*, one in a series of publications entitled *Contemporary Government Challenges*
- developed advice and issued guidelines for agencies on requirements for public servants relating to the Lobbying Code of Conduct and post separation contact with government
- brought leadership issues and advice to the attention of the Senior Executive Service (SES) through *SES notes*, a new quarterly electronic newsletter
- collaborated with the Office of the Privacy Commission to develop advice for agencies on releasing information to complainants
- developed a stand-alone publication, *Citizenship in the Australian Public Service*, bringing together policies and information from three different agencies

- completed and launched the *APStjobs* website, together with two further enhancements, which provides an effective, easy to use, and attractive recruitment site for employees and managers, and potential employees
- contributed to the human resource capability of Pacific Island nations by facilitating a Pacific Human Resource Managers Conference in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat
- contributed to increasing capacity and strategic capability in middle to senior Pacific Island public sector managers by brokering Australian-based work placements.

PRICE FOR OUTPUT 1

The total price for Output 1 was \$14.406 million. This is \$0.337 million

higher than the estimated price of \$14.069 million published in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2007–08.

OUTPUT 1.1 ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO MINISTER, EXECUTIVE AND AGENCY HEADS

The Commission's role under Output 1.1 involves providing advice to government and agencies on the policy and legislative aspects of public administration, people management and employment frameworks. The Commission also provides advice and support to agency executives to develop, promote, review and evaluate APS employment policies and practices.

Achievements that contributed to this output included preparing advice and support for initiatives under the Government's enhanced probity,

TABLE 2: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 1.1 ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO MINISTER, EXECUTIVE AND AGENCY HEADS

| Target | Result |
|---|---|
| Quantity | |
| 1. Number of items to ministers: | |
| • responses to ministerial correspondence—estimate 28 | Achieved. 28 responses to ministerial correspondence. |
| • question time briefs—estimate 21 | Underestimated. 38 new question time briefs. |
| • ministerial requests for briefings—estimate 57 | Underestimated. 113 ministerial requests for briefings |
| 2. Number of reports and responses to requests for information and advice: | |
| • responses to correspondence—estimate 39 | Overestimated. 12 responses produced |
| • Commission Adviceline enquiries—estimate 2500 | Achieved. 2484 enquiries received |
| • reports, circulars and publications—estimate 10 | Underestimated. 9 circulars and 15 publications |
| • advice and support to regional senior staff—estimate 150 | Overestimated. 84. |
| Quality | |
| 1. Percentage of items rated satisfactory or higher in terms of relevance, quality and timeliness—target is 100%. | No longer rated. |
| 2. Agencies satisfied with quality of advice. | Achieved. Agency feedback continues to indicate satisfaction with the advice provided. |
| Estimated price: \$2.001 million | Actual: \$2.262 million |

Note: For completeness and effectiveness of reporting of 'items to Ministers', all areas within the Commission are presented in this table.

accountability and transparency agenda, the development and publication of advice for agencies on building better governance, and a new quarterly electronic newsletter bringing leadership issues and advice to the attention of the SES.

Advice and support to the Minister

A central role of the Commission is to provide high quality, timely advice and support to the Minister. In 2007–08 the Commission provided 28 responses to ministerial correspondence, 38 question time briefs and 113 ministerial briefings. The last two items exceeded estimates largely due to election of the new federal government in November and the increased activity in implementing a new policy agenda.

Formal quality assessment of ministerial briefs ceased in January 2007 at the request of the then Minister, the Hon. Joe Hockey, MP, and has not been reinstated.

The current Minister, Senator the Hon. John Faulkner, plays an active role in the Government's ethics agenda, and the Commission has supported Government efforts to restore Westminster traditions.

Merit-based selection of agency heads

New arrangements have been introduced for merit-based selection of APS agency heads (other than Secretaries and their equivalents) and statutory officers working in, or in conjunction with, APS agencies.

In limited circumstances, the Prime Minister may grant an exemption from this process where, for example, a Minister wishes to appoint someone already at a similar level, or there is an 'eminent' person available.

The Commission's role is to help agencies understand and implement the new policy and to support the Commissioner's role in selection processes.

Featured Highlight

MERIT-BASED SELECTION OF AGENCY HEADS

In February the Government announced the introduction of a new policy requiring transparent merit-based selection of APS agency heads (other than Secretaries and their equivalents) and statutory officers working in, or in conjunction with, APS agencies.

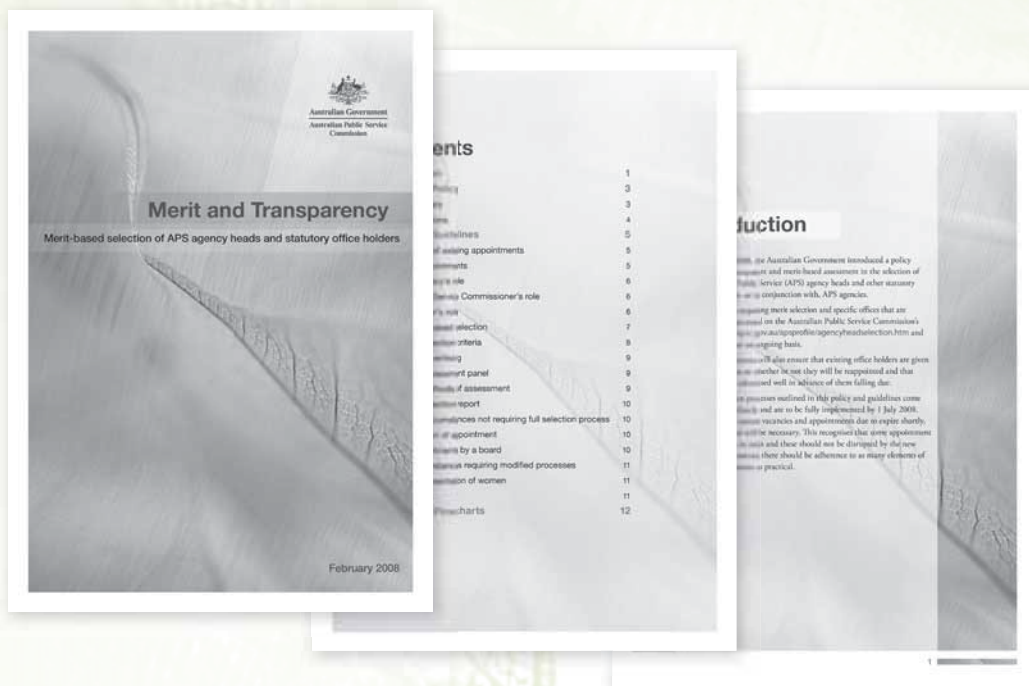
The Commission developed a practical policy that the Government accepted and in February released the policy guidelines entitled *Merit and transparency: merit-based selection of APS agency heads and statutory office holders*.

Under the new policy, a transparent merit-based process applies for filling vacancies, including:

- advertising, at a minimum, in the national press and on the *APSjobs* website
- overseeing the process and assessment of applicants' claims by the relevant departmental Secretary and the Public Service Commissioner
- making a merit-based selection against a core set of selection criteria
- a report from the Secretary to the Minister recommending short listed candidates.

The Secretary and Public Service Commissioner may either personally participate in the process or select appropriate representatives.

To date, 14 vacancies (covering a number of positions) have been advertised in accordance with these new procedures.



Maintaining employment conditions for staff in new agencies

The Government abolished four existing APS departments, and created five new ones, with effect from 3 December 2007. The abolished departments were: Communications, Information Technology and the Arts; Education, Science and Technology; Employment and Workplace Relations; and Industry, Tourism and Resources. The new departments are: Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy; Climate Change; Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; Innovation, Industry, Science and Research; and Resources, Energy and Tourism.

As well, some functions moved between portfolios, for example, privacy and freedom of information functions moved from the Attorney-General's portfolio to the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio; and the National Archives moved from the former Communications, Information Technology and the Arts portfolio to Finance and Deregulation.

To ensure that staff maintained their terms and conditions of employment following the machinery of government change, it was necessary in some instances for Senator the Hon. John Faulkner, in his capacity as Public Service Minister, to issue determinations under section 24(3) of the Act. Two such determinations were issued.

The Commission worked closely with DEEWR to provide guidance and advice to departments and agencies affected by the changed arrangements and issued a number of determinations under section 72 of the Act to move affected staff between agencies. The Commission was involved in developing the section 24(3) determinations, including briefing the Minister on their implementation.

Review of the Public Service Act 1999 and subordinate legislation

In 2005–06 the Commission undertook a review of the operation of the Act and subordinate legislation. It was a low-key review to identify issues that had arisen since the legislation was introduced in 1999. At the completion of the review, the then Government decided not to proceed with proposed changes due to other priorities.

Following the change of government, the Commission is developing further advice on the matter for the Minister, following consultation with the Community and Public Sector Union.

Advice and support services to the Executive

Advice and support were provided to members of the Commission's Executive, including provision of research on public sector matters, preparation of briefs and correspondence and delivery of speech writing services.

Speeches and presentations by the Commission's Executive continue to provide important opportunities for engaging with agencies and external stakeholders, advancing public service issues and stimulating debate.

The Commissioner delivered 32 public speeches and presentations including:

- *Australian Public Service developments*, armchair session, Canada School of Public Service, Ottawa, 2 June 2008
- *An appetite for service—A taste of Government*, annual speech to over 600 APS graduates, 18 April 2008
- *Helping the APS to address future regulatory changes*, Canberra Evaluation Forum, 17 April 2008

- *Leading differently*, speech to the Graduate School of Government, University of Sydney, 28 March 2008
- *The whole of the moon or why would I want to be led by you*, 8 February 2008
- *Launch of the State of the Service Report 2006–07*, 10 December 2007
- *Contemporary Government Challenges*, launch of the new series of Commission publications, 25 October 2007
- *A report on recordkeeping in the APS*, launch of the latest Management Advisory Committee Report, *Note for file: A report on recordkeeping in the APS*, 31 August 2007
- *Responsibilities in the caretaker period*, Treasury Seminar Series, 28 August 2007.

A full list is available at <www.apsc.gov.au/about/pscommissioner.htm>.

Advice and support to agency heads

The Commission's role in providing advice and support to agency heads incorporates advising on the implementation of machinery of government changes and developing materials and guidelines to improve APS performance.

Building better governance

In October the Commission launched four publications in its *Contemporary Government Challenges* series, providing information and advice to help APS agencies improve their performance including *Building better governance* which case studies demonstrate what some APS agencies have done to improve governance.

See also Output 3.4—Research and evaluation for more information.

Supporting the SES

Consistent with promoting a leadership culture and a professional senior executive cadre in the APS, the Commission piloted a new SES newsletter—*SES notes*—and following positive feedback, it published four further editions—October, December, March and June—to an SES audience of over 2000.

As a quarterly online newsletter, *SES notes* provides views and information from the Commission and other organisations on current leadership and other issues relevant to the SES. The content focuses on whole-of-government issues and topics of wider interest to senior executives.

As well, the SES pages on the Commission's website were redesigned and further developed in September to make information more relevant and accessible to SES employees.

Providing information to complainants

The Commission released guidelines for agencies on what information they can or should give to complainants about the outcome of their complaint. The guidelines were developed in consultation with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to address concerns that some agencies tend to overstate *Privacy Act 1988* requirements when deciding not to provide information on the outcome of a complaint, particularly Code of Conduct investigations, to the complainant.

Public servants and the lobbyist code

The Government released the Lobbying Code of Conduct in March 2008; it came into effect on 1 July 2008. Its main aim is to ensure that government representatives (including APS employees, Ministers and their staff, and Australian Defence Force personnel) who are approached by

professional lobbyists are aware of the interests those lobbyists represent and can make informed judgments about what they are trying to achieve.

In consultation with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Commission issued guidelines for agencies to ensure the APS complies with the Code.

While the Code is not intended to affect ongoing technical and professional cooperation between the APS and businesses and organisations, the guidelines encourage agencies to ensure lobbyists with whom they deal are registered and that they know who lobbyists represent and what they hope to accomplish.

The Code places time restrictions on former government representatives, including former SES employees, from lobbying on matters with which they were involved in their previous roles. The guidelines require agencies to institute systems to ensure lobbyists comply with these restrictions.

Public servants and the media

In December the Commission issued new guidelines covering public servants' participation in public information and awareness initiatives. The guidelines were issued when debate over public servant participation in information campaigns highlighted the need for clearer and more up-to-date advice. It also addresses the appropriate use of new media, such as the Internet.

The guidelines require agencies to institute arrangements to ensure public servants understand their roles in explaining new or ongoing Government policies and programmes to the public and other stakeholders and to establish processes for effectively and ethically managing contacts with the media. The guidelines incorporate

the Government's policy not to use public servants in government advertising unless that role is essential to communicate an important message on an issue such as public health or similar for which the Commissioner has first given approval.

Public servants and the new workplace relations environment

The Commission contributed to the Government's review of the policy framework for bargaining over remuneration and employment conditions. In February DEEWR issued advice to agencies on the new bargaining framework for agreement-making in the APS, which incorporated guidance on redundancy and mobility issues for which the Commission is responsible.

The bargaining framework continues to provide flexibility for agencies, ensuring they have scope to provide pay and conditions that enable them to recruit and retain key employees. With the phasing out of AWAs agencies must use other instruments to tailor pay and conditions to individual circumstances where necessary. The Commission has worked with DEEWR to assess the options and provide agencies with information on the two main alternatives—common law contracts and determinations under section 24(1) of the Act.

The Commission will continue to assess aspects of draft collective agreements and determinations to ensure agency proposals comply with the Government policy framework (see also Output 1.2).

Australian citizenship and the public service

In December, the Commission released a new online publication, *Citizenship in the Australian Public Service* that aimed to bring together, in one place, information and advice about citizenship requirements in the APS. As well as Public Service Act

requirements, the publication included up-to-date information on migration and work visa requirements from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and information on security matters from the Attorney-General's Department.

Employment Policy Adviceline and advice to regional senior staff

The Commission's Employment Policy Adviceline provides information to APS agencies on a range of matters relating to APS employment policy. Callers from an agency's human resource or corporate area, or senior managers, can seek advice on the legislative and policy framework in areas such as recruitment, termination of employment, redundancy, the APS Values and Code of Conduct, performance management, and better practice.

While agency heads are responsible for most APS employment matters in their agencies, the Adviceline helps agencies in a variety of ways, including how to find the most relevant publicly available information, including on the Commission's website.

The Adviceline received fewer enquiries in 2007–08 (2484) than in 2006–07 (2773); calls about APS employment issues again dominated (Table 3). The reduction was mainly due to a February 2007 efficiency decision to provide Adviceline assistance primarily to human resource areas and senior managers within APS agencies. Previously, the Adviceline received a significant number of enquiries unrelated to the Act, and from individual APS employees that were better dealt with by agency human resource areas.

The number of requests for advice made by email decreased by 1% compared to last year, with 745 enquires in 2007–08 being emailed to <employmentadvice@apsc.gov.au>.

Commission staff in regional offices provide advice and support to regional SES and senior regionally-based staff on the Commission's role and services. Assistance provided relates to the APS Values and Code of Conduct, capability development, better people management, and employment policy and services. Where advice is complex and/or time consuming, the details are

TABLE 3: MAIN CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYMENT POLICY ADVICELINE CALLS, 2005–06 TO 2007–08

| Subject | 2005–06 | 2006–07 | 2007–08 |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Staffing matters | 935 | 1103 | 933 |
| General legislative issues | 416 | 138 | 135 |
| Separations | 261 | 259 | 190 |
| Conditions/entitlements | 259 | 235 | 351 |
| Review matters | 233 | 111 | 88 |
| APS Values/Code of Conduct | 212 | 204 | 265 |
| Workplace diversity issues | 80 | 47 | 29 |
| SES matters | 54 | 60 | 50 |
| Mobility/reciprocal mobility | 48 | 29 | 35 |
| Competencies/qualifications | 48 | 20 | 6 |
| Other | 743 | 567 | 402 |
| Total | 3289 | 2773 | 2484 |

recorded for later accountability. During the year, advice was provided to senior regional staff on 84 occasions.

SES adviser role

The Commission's Group Manager Policy is the SES adviser. She received 53 calls during the year. This function gives SES across the APS the opportunity to call a senior member of the Commission to seek advice about applying the employment framework or interpreting the APS Values. The Group Manager also helps SES officers understand how the redeployment, retirement and redundancy provisions of the Act apply to them.

In addition, all members of the Executive (the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and the Merit Protection Commissioner) provide advice to senior SES and agency heads on sensitive management matters.

Circulars

The Commission issued nine circulars notifying agencies of changes in APS people and performance management. They covered a range of subjects including the new Lobbying Code of Conduct, the *APSjobs* website, public servant involvement in publication information campaigns, release of information to complainants, and post separation employment. See also www.apsc.gov.au/circulars/index.html and www.apsc.gov.au/publications.

OUTPUT 1.2 EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Commission provides a range of employment services to APS employees and agencies to help them meet their legislative responsibilities.

A significant achievement that contributed to this output was the management of the machinery of government changes to implement the new APS organisational structure.

The development and launch of the *APSjobs* website and enhancements, which incorporates the Gazette, was another significant achievement which contributed to this output. Given the Commission's capacity to offer improved services from the site, the performance measures for 2008–09 have been tightened.

Producing the Public Service Gazette

The Commission finished redeveloping the online Public Service Gazette—rebranded *APSjobs*—into an APS employment portal in August 2007 consistent with the Management Advisory Committee's 2005 decisions in its report *Managing and sustaining the APS workforce*.

The new site provides an up-to-date more attractive and coherent image of the APS for job seekers. It has several new features that make it easier to find out about the APS as an employer and apply for jobs, including those incorporated into the electronic APS Employment Gazette.

The Commission produces the weekly Employment Gazette to inform the public of APS employment opportunities, recruitment outcomes and certain other APS employment decisions. The Commission produced 50 Employment Gazettes in 2007–08; the number of notices lodged decreased by 4.52% compared to the number lodged in 2006–07 (Table 5).

TABLE 4: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 1.2 EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

| Target | Result |
|--|---|
| Quantity | |
| 1. To provide Gazette services to enable agencies to satisfy legislative requirements to notify certain employment actions—50 gazettes produced per year. | Achieved. 50 Gazettes produced in accordance with requirements. |
| 2. Perform statutory responsibilities: | |
| a) Number of SES engagements, promotions and terminations—estimate 240. | Exceeded. 280 SES employment matters dealt with. |
| b) Services to support any machinery of government changes, approval of delegations, and whistleblowing report responses provided by the Commissioner—estimate 55 cases. | Exceeded. 34 machinery of government cases, 11 consents to delegations of powers to outsiders and the Commissioner responded to 20 whistleblowing reports. |
| 3. Estimated number of fee-for-service employment-related services—estimate 750. | Exceeded. 886 fee-for-service employment-related services were conducted. |
| Quality | |
| 1. Percentage of Gazette entries accurately published in accordance with legislative requirements—target 100%. | Achieved. No significant errors or omissions identified. |
| 2. a) 95% of agency SES employment recommendations able to be endorsed within one week of receipt of documents. | Achieved. 100% of SES staffing requests from agencies finalised within one week of receipt. |
| b) | Partly achieved. 100% completed within legislative timeframes when the Commission was given prior notification. |
| • 100% of machinery of government changes completed within legislative timeframes | |
| • 95% of approvals of delegations to outsiders completed within five working days | Achieved. 100% of agency requests finalised within five working days. |
| • 100% of requests for consultation on, or approval for, re-engagement completed within five working days | Achieved. 100% of agency requests finalised within five working days. |
| • a high level of satisfaction of clients with the accuracy, quality and timeliness of individual cases. | Achieved. Day-to-day client feedback continues to indicated a high level of satisfaction with the services provided. |
| Estimated price: \$5.997 million | Actual: \$6.783 million |

TABLE 5: COMPARATIVE NUMBER OF GAZETTE NOTICES LODGED, 2002–03 TO 2007–08

| Year | Number of notices lodged | Percentage difference on previous year (%) |
|---------|--------------------------|--|
| 2002–03 | 39,100 | – |
| 2003–04 | 31,900 | – 18.41 |
| 2004–05 | 39,000 | + 22.26 |
| 2005–06 | 47,918 | + 22.87 |
| 2006–07 | 58,044 | + 21.13 |
| 2007–08 | 55,418 | – 4.52 |

Featured Highlight

APSJOB

The new *APStjobs* website was launched in August. Further development continued this year, with the aim of producing a modern online employment portal for the APS.

Two separate development phases were carried out to add a range of new functionality. The website now offers:

- interactive email alerts for job seekers
- a plain English guide to getting a job in the APS
- improved searching capability
- mobility opportunities and major recruitment campaigns
- a register of former APS employees for agencies to draw upon
- improved online lodgment processes
- reporting functions that allow sophisticated monitoring and related statistics.

Further refinement of *APStjobs* to support the Commission's *Finance Jobs* recruitment campaign and the Career Transition and Support Centre is continuing.



Managing SES engagements, promotions and retirements with incentives

A number of SES staffing actions, particularly those relating to SES promotions, engagements and offers to retire with an incentive, require the Commissioner's agreement before proceeding.

The Commissioner considered and endorsed 254 SES selection exercises, a slight increase from the previous year. As well, she examined and endorsed 36 SES retirements with an incentive under section 37 of the Act—a similar number to recent years.

Both the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner were involved in a range of senior selection exercises. The Commission maintained a timely and effective turnaround when dealing with SES casework. (See also, the *APS Statistical Bulletin 2007–08*, produced as part of the Commissioner's *State of the Service Report 2007–08*.)

Implementing machinery of government changes

The Commission managed 34 machinery of government changes in 2007–08, an increase on recent years due to the change of government in November 2007 and the implementation of a new APS organisational structure. Five changes were for agencies moving staff into the APS (22 determinations); 29 were for moves within the APS (49 determinations).

The most significant changes arose from the Government's decision to abolish four departments and create five new ones. Other changes of note included:

- moving the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman and the Wheat Export Authority (now the Export Wheat Commission) into the APS

- establishing the Office of the Workplace Ombudsman and the Workplace Authority as separate APS agencies.

This presented a challenge for the Commission to complete the necessary determinations under section 72 of the Act within legislative timeframes. In relation to the abolition of departments and creation of new ones that occurred on 3 December 2007, the Commission was not given prior notification of these changes. In these cases, the necessary section 72 determinations were made as a matter of priority to satisfy departmental needs.

In addition, following the then government's decision to assume responsibility for the Mersey Campus of the North West Regional Hospital in Tasmania, Tasmanian state government employees working at the Mersey Campus were offered employment in the APS with effect from 23 November 2007. The Commission's role included detailed policy advice and assistance to agencies as well as execution of the determination to effect the changes.

In December the Commission released a revised online version of *Implementing machinery of government changes: a good practice guide*, incorporating updated information and minor corrections.

Ensuring leadership continuity in the APS Senior Executive

The Commissioner again collected information on the skills and capacities of the Senior Executive Band 3 group, which represents a major feeder group for future Secretaries and other APS agency heads. She also collected information on selected Senior Executive Band 2 employees in terms of their capacities to move to higher levels in future. The Commissioner uses this information to provide the Secretary of the Department of

the Prime Minister and Cabinet with an assessment of APS succession management issues, both in general terms as well as in relation to specific appointments.

Performance assessment for Secretaries

The Commissioner and the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet provided information to the Prime Minister on Secretaries' performance during 2006–07. The Commissioner separately advised the Prime Minister on the four Executive Agency Heads' performance in 2006–07. This information was used by the Prime Minister to determine appropriate performance bonuses for Secretaries and officers for that period.

Delegations to outsiders

The Commissioner received nine requests from agencies seeking consent under section 78(8) of the Act to allow the relevant agency head to delegate his or her powers under the Act and subordinate legislation to 'outsiders', such as people not employed under the Act. As the people concerned possessed the relevant experience and knowledge to effectively exercise powers under the Act the Commissioner agreed to each request.

Employment-related services on a fee-for-service basis

Under section 41(1)(k) of the Act, the Commissioner is able, on request, to provide advice and assistance to agencies on public service matters. Some of this work is conducted on a fee-for-service basis; the Commission responded to 886 such requests.

Most of the requests for employment services made to regional offices related to the recruitment and selection of staff. The Commission provided a number of agencies with convenors, panel members and support for selection advisory committees. Other

fee-for-service activities included alternative dispute resolution services and reviews of organisational structure.

Among the most frequent users of Commission services were the Department of Defence, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and the Australian Taxation Office. Agencies using the Commission's employment-related services for the first time included the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman and the Australian Electoral Commission. Some regions experienced a downturn in requests for services during the post election and pre Budget periods while other regions, such as Tasmania, experienced increased interest in the support the Commission can provide.

Employment related fee-for-service activities include those provided under the Merit Protection Commissioner's functions, such as Independent Selection Advisory Committees. See the Merit Protection Commissioner's Annual Report at Part four of this report for details.

Remuneration and workplace agreements

DEEWR provides the Commission with copies of draft agency collective agreements for review against the Commission's responsibilities provided for in the *Australian Government employment bargaining framework*. Commission staff also reviewed collective section 24(1) determinations.

In particular, the Commission assesses redeployment, reduction and retrenchment arrangements in agreements to ensure agencies include compulsory redundancy arrangements while being satisfied that any changes do not enhance existing arrangements.

The Commission received 38 requests from DEEWR to assess redeployment, reduction and retrenchment arrangements in agreements and determinations (Table 6). Of those, 40 (87.5%) were conducted within the five-day assessment period agreed with DEEWR (or the average turnaround time of four days). The delays to the remaining assessments were caused by the complexity of the matters dealt with in the agreements.

Public interest whistleblowing

Section 16 of the Act prohibits victimisation of, or discrimination against, an APS employee who reports a breach or alleged breach of the APS Code of Conduct. Agency heads must establish procedures for dealing with such reports. The procedures must observe procedural fairness, comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and provide that APS employees may report breaches or alleged breaches of the Code to the agency head, the Commissioner or the Merit Protection Commissioner. Except in exceptional circumstances, the expectation is that the report is initially made to the agency head.

The Commissioner received 22 reports in 2007–08 (Table 7). Thirteen were from employees and nine were from private citizens, two of which were still on hand at the end of the reporting period. Four reports from APS employees were on hand from the previous reporting period, three of which met the criteria for investigation by the Commissioner. In all three cases, the Commissioner concluded there was no evidence to support a recommendation to

the relevant agency head that they consider the allegations under their Code of Conduct procedures.

Of the 13 reports received from employees, the Commissioner considered a disclosure about the conduct of an agency head and two other agency employees, and concluded after an inquiry that there was a possible breach by one employee and none of the other allegations were substantiated. Of the remaining disclosures from APS employees, seven did not meet the criteria for the Commissioner to investigate. At the end of the reporting period, three disclosures that met the criteria for investigation were on hand, but not finalised, and the two remaining reports were still being considered.

Where disclosures did not meet the criteria for consideration, advice was provided on ways in which concerns could be addressed either by referral to the relevant agency head or other administrative review bodies, such as the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Information on whistleblowing reports sent to the Merit Protection Commissioner is separately reported at Part four of this report.

Inquiry

In June 2008, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry released the report of the Callinan inquiry into the outbreak of equine influenza in Australia. Among other things, that report identified a number of systemic issues in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and referred to the actions of particular employees. The Minister for Agriculture,

TABLE 6: REMUNERATION AND WORKPLACE AGREEMENT ASSESSMENTS, 2004-05 TO 2007-08

| | 2004-05 | 2005-06 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| No. received | 32 | 60 | 73 | 45 |
| No. conducted within agreed period | 32 | 53 | 70 | 40 |

TABLE 7: PUBLIC INTEREST WHISTLEBLOWING REPORTS, 2004–05 TO 2007–08

| | 2004–05 | 2005–06 | 2006–07 | 2007–08 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| No. received | 19 | 17 | 21 | 22 |
| No. finalised | 16 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| No. on hand at end of reporting period | 3 | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| Source: | | | | |
| • Employees | 10 | 9 | 11 | 13 |
| • Private citizens | 9 | 8 | 10 | 9 |

Fisheries and Forestry requested the Commissioner to examine the report and advise whether it disclosed any matter which might warrant action under the APS Code of Conduct.

The Commissioner conducted an inquiry consistent with section 41(1)(d) of the Act. The Commissioner recommended that the conduct of some employees mentioned in the report be further considered by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to determine whether they may have breached the Code of Conduct.

Career transition and support centre

In March, the Minister announced establishment of the Career Transition and Support Centre to help redeploy excess and potentially excess staff. The centre was established to minimise the personal impact of the Government’s efficiency measures and to ensure experienced public servants and those with specialist skills were retained.

The centre opened for business on 1 May 2008 and is working with agencies to provide best practice advice on redeployment, including application of redeployment principles, and to provide case management services to centre clients.

OUTPUT 1.3 INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND ORGANISATIONS

The Commission partners with AusAID to deliver programmes that support public sector reform in the Asia–Pacific region. The Commission also supports international public sector reforms through its input to the OECD Public Governance Committee and the Board of the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management, and shares information and knowledge on public sector reform by hosting visiting delegations.

Important achievements during 2007–08 included contributing to the human resource capability of Pacific Island nations by co-facilitating a Pacific Human Resource Managers Conference and contributing to brokering Australian-based work placements which aim to increase the capacity and strategic capability in Pacific Island public sector managers.

Managing international responsibilities

The Commission actively collaborated with AusAID to support Australian Government efforts to maintain professional, impartial public services and to facilitate public sector reform in the region. Feedback from partner countries in the region confirms they benefit from exposure to Australia’s governance arrangements and experiences

with public sector reform. The challenge they face is to adapt this to their local situation and scale. The Commission strives to ensure its programmes and activities strategically align with the country strategies of both AusAID and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Supporting public sector reform in the Pacific

The Commission contributed to human resource capacity building in the Pacific by facilitating a Pacific Human Resource Managers Conference for 20 Pacific human resource managers in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat. Participants workshopped human resource issues affecting the region and identified areas

where information sharing among Pacific countries could help address these issues.

The Commission contributed to increasing capacity and strategic capability in middle to senior Pacific Island public managers by brokering Australian based work attachments for 14 Pacific island officials. These attachments were run in two groups; one focused on finance and the other on human resource management. The programmes provided a variety of learning experiences across federal and state governments.

The Commission organised regional work attachments for five Pacific island officials that provided regionally relevant experiences that are transferable to participants’ home agencies.

TABLE 8: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 1.3 INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND ORGANISATIONS

| Target | Result |
|--|---|
| Quantity | |
| 1. Deliver high quality technical assistance overseas in line with records of understanding with AusAID priorities: Pacific, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. | Achieved. The Commission supports two deployed officials in the Papua New Guinea Department of Personnel Management and two deployed officials in Indonesia who provide advice to the Indonesian Minister for Administrative Reform. The Commission has run a human resource managers conference and a work attachment programme for eight Pacific Island public servants. |
| 2. Share information, knowledge and skills with visiting officials in Australia. | Achieved. Commission staff have presented to visiting Indonesian officials, Pacific human resource managers and a work attachment programme of eight Pacific human resource managers. |
| 3. Number of overseas delegation visits coordinated and hosted—estimate 20. | Achieved. The Commission has coordinated and hosted 20 visiting international delegations. |
| Quality | |
| 1. High level of satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of reports, advice and services provided. | Achieved. The Commission received direct positive feedback and support for its international work from the Indonesia Minister for Administrative Reform and the head of the Ministry for Administrative Reform. The Commission also received positive feedback from independent reviews of its Pacific work undertaken by AusAID, with multi-year funding approved by AusAID for the first time. |
| 2. A high level of satisfaction of the delegations as advised by third-party organisers. | Achieved. Consistently high levels of satisfaction expressed through evaluation forms, feedback in formal letters of appreciation and informal emails of thanks from visiting delegations. |
| Estimated price: \$2.906 million | Actual price: \$2.478 million |

The Commission's active participation in the *Pacific village online*, a tool for Pacific public sector professionals, enabled it to share practice related experiences, knowledge and resources to help improve public service governance in the region.

Under the *Strongim Gavman* programme, the Commission contributed to public sector reform in Papua New Guinea by supporting two officials deployed to the Government of Papua New Guinea. The officials provided strategic human resource advice and industrial relations support to the Secretary and senior staff of the Department of Personnel Management.

The Commission worked closely with AusAID and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to implement the Prime Minister's new Pacific Engagement Strategy that focuses on providing Pacific public service capacity building. The Commission has devised a number of new initiatives for future work with the Pacific.

Supporting public sector reform in Indonesia

The Commission continued to work with its three counterpart Indonesian civil service agencies—the National Civil Service Agency, the Ministry for Administrative Reform and the National Administration Institute—on human resource policy issues including merit-based engagement and promotion processes and competency-based training. The Commission supports two employees in Jakarta who provide policy advice and support to counterpart officials.

The Commission provided information sessions on its personnel databases to an Indonesian delegation sponsored by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and on executive leadership development and training, the APS Values and Code of Conduct, and the Career Transition and Support Centre to a delegation from the Indonesian Fiscal Policy Office sponsored by the Department of the Treasury; and administrative assistance to a Ministry for Administrative Reform delegation seeking to learn more about service delivery systems.



Pacific Human Resource Managers Conference: group portrait, Canberra, April 2008

Participating at international forums

The Commissioner participated in a number of international forums, namely:

- The Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) board meeting and meetings with other Canadian Government agencies, 16–17 July 2007.
- The Third Annual Pacific Regional Public Service Commissioner's Conference in Samoa on 24 July 2007, where the Commissioner delivered the keynote address.
- The United Kingdom, Australian, New Zealand, Ireland and Canadian Centre of Government meeting run by the Canadian Government where the Commissioner spoke on Public Service Renewal, attended meetings with other Canadian Government officials and addressed the Canadian School of Public Service, 28 May to 3 June 2008.

The Deputy Public Service Commissioner

attended the 36th and 37th OECD Public Governance Committee meetings in Paris, 16–17 October 2007 and 17–18 April 2008 respectively.

The Group Manager, Programmes, attended a CAPAM conference on Leadership, Learning, Institutes and Public Service, in Ghana, 7–9 November 2007, where she updated members on the Commonwealth Secretaries Conference and the Commonwealth Ministers' Forum and delivered a presentation on the Commission's Integrated Leadership System.

Hosting visits by overseas delegations

Twenty international delegations visited the Commission to discuss public sector reform and the Commissioner's roles and responsibilities. Most visitors to the Commission were from Indonesia followed by China; others were from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Canada, Germany, India, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and the OECD.



Delegates from the Pacific Government Support Programme, Melbourne, June 2008

During the year the Commission's Melbourne office hosted nine delegates from eight Pacific nations as part of a work attachment programme under AusAID's Pacific Government Support Programme. The office facilitated visits to the Department of Human Services, Victoria and the State Services Authority Victoria, and delivered training in practical application of the Integrated Leadership System and recruitment and selection.

OUTPUT 1.4 MERIT PROTECTION AND OTHER SERVICES

The Merit Protection Commissioner's functions are detailed in section 50 of the Act and Part 7 of the Public Service Regulations 1999.

An individual may report a whistleblower allegation to either the Merit Protection Commissioner or Public Service Commissioner. Where the report is made to the Merit Protection Commissioner, the Act provides that the Commissioner will make available staff necessary to assist the Merit Protection Commissioner perform her statutory functions through a memorandum of understanding. Commission staff

TABLE 9: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 1.4 MERIT PROTECTION AND OTHER SERVICES

| Target | Result |
|---|---|
| Quantity | |
| 1. Conduct reviews and respond to whistleblowing reports. Estimated number of: | |
| • reviews—238 | Exceeded. 261 review applications received |
| • whistleblowing report responses—5 | Achieved. 5 whistleblowing report responses |
| 2. Policy and advice services provided to the Merit Protection Commissioner, Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner and Parliamentary departments—estimate 80 activities. | Achieved. 74 activities for policy and advice services |
| Quality | |
| 1. | |
| • Review processes accepted as being impartial, fair and effective. | Achieved. Feedback from agencies and employees indicated a high level of acceptance of processes as being impartial, fair and effective. |
| • 70% of reviews completed within published timeframes. | Not achieved. 57% of reviews completed within published timeframes |
| • 100% of whistleblowing reports receive an initial response within six weeks, with any further investigations conducted in a timely and objective manner. | Not achieved. 80% of whistleblowing reports received an initial response within six weeks. |
| 2. A high level of satisfaction, of the Merit Protection Commissioner and Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner, with the relevance, quality and timeliness of advice and support provided. | Achieved. Feedback from the Merit Protection Commissioner, including in her role as Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner, has indicated a high level of satisfaction with the support services provided in respect of her role. |
| Estimated price: \$3.165 million | Actual: \$2.883 million |

The Merit Protection Commissioner's report is at Part four of this report.

members undertake several activities on behalf of the Merit Protection Commissioner, including in her role as Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner. These activities include:

- conducting reviews of promotion decisions, primary reviews including reviews of determinations and sanctions with regard to breaches of the APS Code of Conduct and secondary reviews of other employment actions
- providing assistance on matters relating to whistleblowing reports
- providing support services, such as preparing management reports.

OUTPUT 2 DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Output 2 is drawn from the Public Service Commissioner's statutory role, listed in section 41 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (the Act). In particular, to build the capability of the Australian Public Service (APS) for the future by providing leadership, learning and development products and programmes that meet the current and emerging business needs of agencies.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In a sector that is facing increasingly complex challenges and a demanding operating environment, the Commission identified the leadership, learning and development needs of agencies and supported capability development across all levels in the APS.

The Commission's achievements under Output 2 included:

- implemented the national leadership, learning and development strategy
- conducted two successful Leading Australia's Future in Asia (LAFIA) programmes
- conducted the highly successful *A taste of Government* seminar attended by 670 participants
- delivered a successful *Ministerial conversations*/New Directions series incorporating a Prime Minister's event
- co-presented, with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the then Department of Finance and Administration, a series of Caretaker Convention Seminars for APS employees in the lead-up to the federal election in November
- developed and delivered the inaugural Leadership Across Borders programme
- achieved Registered Training Organisation accreditation
- facilitated strong growth in SES programmes, EL programmes and APS 1–6 programmes including a 20% increase in numbers of participants overall
- recorded strong growth in usage of the Woden Training Facility with 15,671 delegates attending training between July 2007 and June 2008
- delivered 11 Career Development Assessment Centre (CDAC) programmes as well as two agency-specific programmes
- hosted a valedictory lecture event for Dr Peter Shergold AC
- delivered successful Contemporary Challenges and State of the Service series arising from the Commission's evaluation
- updated the APS Induction modules developed in 2006–07 and made them available for download from the Commission's website.

PRICE FOR OUTPUT 2

The total price for Output 2 for 2007–08 was \$16.258 million. This is \$0.559 million higher than the estimated price of \$15.699 million published in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2007–08.

TABLE 10: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 2.1 LEADERSHIP SERVICES

| Target | Result |
|--|---|
| Quantity | |
| 1. Increase leadership knowledge, skills and capability of SES and Executive Level groups across the APS. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of seminars and forums delivered—estimate 153. | Not achieved. 144 seminars and forums were delivered |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of agencies engaged through at least one scheduled event, activity or network focused on promoting leadership—target is 75% | Exceeded. 90% of agencies were engaged through at least one scheduled event, activity or network focused on promoting leadership. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Career Development Assessment Centres delivered—estimate 10 with 118 participants. | Exceeded. 13 CDAC programmes were delivered with a total of 145 participants. |
| 2. Promote effective implementation of leadership development across the APS. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of consultations conducted with agencies to support the agency in integrating the Integrated Leadership System into their practices and systems. These consultations involve structured planned interventions to specifically develop the agency’s leadership practices and/or capacity—target is 10 consultations with agencies. | Not achieved. Detailed briefings to Centrelink and the Department of the Senate on the implementation of the Integrated Leadership System were undertaken. |
| Quality | |
| Percentage of responding participants in the Leadership Development Network who when surveyed give a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale, for: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevance | Mostly achieved. 84% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. This is a slight improvement on the previous financial year (which was 78%). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> usefulness | Not achieved. 79% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> administration and coordination. | Not achieved. 80% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. |
| Target is 85%. | |
| Percentage of responding participants who when surveyed give the Career Development Assessment Centre a rating of 3 (beneficial) or above on a 5-point scale for: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gained a better understanding of strengths and development needs | Exceeded. 97% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developed a better understanding of leadership capabilities | Exceeded. 97% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assisted participants to be more effective leaders. | Exceeded. 95% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. |
| Target is 90%. | |
| Estimated price: \$5.244 million | Actual: \$5.027 million |

OUTPUT 2.1 LEADERSHIP SERVICES

The Commission performs an important and significant role in building and sustaining APS leadership capability. Central to this role is a focus on the SES leadership cadre.

Increasingly, however, the Commission is also focusing on meeting the particular needs of the Executive Level group that will, as the feeder group to the SES, provide the basis for renewal of the SES over time.

All programme development is underpinned by the capabilities defined in the Integrated Leadership System. There are now six programmes that support leadership and management development for Executive Level employees with four of these being developed in 2007–08.

Achievements that contributed to this output included the implementation of the national leadership, learning and development strategy including the release of the *Learn Lead Succeed* brochure, the facilitation of a successful *Ministerial conversations* series including the Prime Minister's address on the Government's policy priorities, Dr Shergold's valedictory lecture and the delivery of 13 Career Development Assessment Centres.

A national approach to leadership, learning and development

A major focus of the national strategy has been to make learning and development products and services more widely available to APS employees by offering programmes in a variety of delivery modes and formats. This approach has seen the introduction of a variety of new forums, events and flexible delivery modes which has been reflected in reduced attendance at some established programmes, but an overall increase in programme participation. Work is continuing on exploring new and innovative

interventions to support capability building in agencies.

In May 2007, the Commission completed a national strategy for its leadership, learning and development activities, programmes, events and services. The strategy identifies the necessary planning, development, evaluation and business support arrangements to ensure the Commission effectively meets and supports the needs of APS agencies and their employees. Progress in implementing key actions has been monitored, and will continue during 2008–09. Progress reports have identified an excellent completion rate of key actions.

In July 2007, the Commission released the *Learn Lead Succeed* brochure on its website, and distributed copies to Secretaries, agency heads and departmental and agency human resource areas. The brochure describes the unique role of the Commission in addressing APS capability development requirements (see <www.apsc.gov.au/learn>).

SES Band 2 residential programme

The SES Band 2 residential leadership programme aims to strengthen the leadership capabilities identified for senior executives in the Integrated Leadership System, and enhance their knowledge and awareness of contemporary challenges facing the APS (including whole-of-government problems, engaging citizens effectively, and appropriate governance and accountability arrangements). First developed in 2005–06 this programme continues to receive positive feedback.

Thirty participants attended the SES Band 2 residential programme, *Leading across boundaries*, conducted in July and September 2007 and April 2008.

SES Band 3 forum

The SES Band 3 forum offers the opportunity for peers, from diverse agency contexts, to meet and explore topical issues. The forum operates as a roundtable with internal and external subject matter experts presenting facts and trends, followed by facilitated discussions within the group. These factors provide the framework for selecting forum topics and result in events that are relevant, informative and popular.

Two forums were held attracting 36 participants. By comparison three forums were held during 2006–07 and attracted 41 participants.

The topics this year were:

- *State of the Service Report*, with discussion led by the Deputy Public Service Commissioner, Lynne Tacy
- *Code of Conduct for Ministerial Advisers and the Lobbyist Register*, with discussion led by the Deputy Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Mike Mrdak.

SES Band 1 residential programme

The Commission delivered another round of successful residential leadership programmes for SES Band 1 executives. The schedule included:

- The *New leadership horizons* programme for SES Band 1 executives with less than three years' experience at level. The programme focuses on the distinctive contribution of this group and, in particular, the difference between the roles of an Executive Level employee and the SES Band 1 level.
- The *Transforming leadership* programme for SES Band 1 executives with more than three years' experience at level. The programme focuses on the contribution

of this group within the APS environment and emphasises individuals' roles in building not only their own capability, but also that of others.

Both programmes consider the differing complexity at each leadership level and help participants define their contribution to the APS, understand their role as part of the SES, develop their capacity to respond to current and emerging issues (including whole-of-government imperatives), and strengthen their ability to manage themselves in a changing, devolved environment.

Five *New leadership horizons* programmes were delivered to 76 SES Band 1 participants and six *Transforming leadership* programmes were delivered to 77 SES participants during the year.

Expertise development

The Commission offers expertise development programmes to help senior executives develop their knowledge and skills across a broad range of key areas, such as policy, programme management, financial management and regulation. These programmes are of significant assistance to members of the SES as they embrace new roles, responsibilities and challenges in furthering their careers.

Expertise development programmes introduced in previous years and run again included:

- *Programme management* helps APS leaders achieve excellence in programme design and delivery. It explores programme management in a broad context, ensuring an understanding of the relationships between all aspects of policy implementation. Four programmes were conducted; 54 senior executives attended.

- *Mastering your financial environment* is aimed at SES new to the public service or who need to refresh their knowledge in the area of financial compliance. Five programmes were conducted; 84 senior executives attended.
- The *Regulatory environment* programme, led by Professor Allan Fels AO, was held in November; 28 people attended.
- The *Regulatory practice for SES* programme, examining the cutting edge of regulatory theory and practice, was held in June; 12 people attended.
- The Commission delivered 12 iterations of its highly successful *Preparing to appear before parliamentary committees* programme. This programme focuses on building confidence, public presentation skills and personal communications by using role-play to simulate, for example, appearances at Estimates' hearings; 74 people attended.

Two new expertise development programmes were introduced during the year, namely:

- *Policy for SES* which discusses emerging and complex policy issues and challenges as they affect senior public sector managers, analysts and leaders. Five programmes were conducted; 91 senior executives attended.
- The *Strategic communications* programme which examines the key areas of identifying and working with key stakeholders and learning, organisational change, crisis management and communication. One programme was held in June; 24 senior executives attended.

SES breakfast seminar series

The Commission's regular breakfast seminars for APS senior executives provide participants with a forum in which to interact with leading speakers on contemporary issues that are directly relevant to their work. The seminar series also offers a regular opportunity for senior executives to discuss issues of common interest with colleagues.

During the year, 752 executives attended eight breakfast seminars (Table 11). Speakers included:

- Professor Quentin Grafton, Crawford School of Economics and Government, Australian National University, *Social capital: a policy perspective*
- Mr Ross Gibbs, Director-General, National Archives of Australia, *Current recordkeeping issues in the APS*
- Dr Sue Gordon AO, Magistrate in the Perth Children's Court and Chair of the Australian Government's National Indigenous Council and Northern Territory Emergency Response Taskforce, *Policy and service delivery issues affecting Indigenous Australians*
- Professor Paul 't Hart, Professor of Political Science at the Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, *How do (senior) public officials combine their twin roles of 'serving' and 'leading'?*
- Mr Clive Hamilton, author and commentator, *Affluenza and what really matters in Government today*
- Mr Robin Ryde, Chief Executive, United Kingdom National School of Government and author, *Leadership beyond authority: perspectives from the UK public service.*

Leader to Leader series

The *Leader to leader* series is a new event of strategic discussions aimed at stimulating debate about APS-wide challenges and future public sector reforms, where SES officers have the opportunity to ask questions of guest speakers and further discuss issues while networking with colleagues.

Six *Leader to leader* events attracted 475 executives during the year. Speakers included:

- Dr Ken Henry AC, Secretary, Department of the Treasury, *Impacts of the intergenerational report*
- Dr Gordon de Brouwer, Department of the Treasury, *APEC and the economic challenges facing the Asia–Pacific*
- Mr Nick Warner, Secretary, Department of Defence and Ms Elizabeth Proust, Chair of the Defence Management Review, *Defence Management Review*
- The Hon. Dr Geoffrey Gallop, University of Sydney, *What is the point of the public service?*
- Mr Greg Russell, Airservices Australia, *Stepping up to change*
- Dr Martin Parkinson, Secretary, Department of Climate Change, *Australia's climate change challenge*.

SES updates

SES updates ensure senior executives are well briefed on the public sector environment, with particular reference to developments in government policy, expectations and legislation.

The Deputy Public Service Commissioner, Lynne Tacy, leads discussions on some of the current and emerging trends—politically, demographically and globally—that are affecting the APS. Participants can explore the information presented and how it relates to them and their organisation. These updates focus on the *Shapes strategic thinking* capability of the Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework.

Sixty-three people attended two *SES updates*; this represents an increase of 70% on 2006–07. Topics included:

- *State of the Service Report 2006–07*
- *APS-wide issues of interest to the SES* (including meeting APS workforce challenges, trends at the SES and Executive Level, Management Advisory Committee reports and managing during the caretaker period).

SES snapshots

SES snapshots are aimed at providing members of the SES with the opportunity to attend short, highly focused workshops on current

TABLE 11: ATTENDANCE AT SES BREAKFAST SEMINAR SERIES, 2002–03 TO 2007–08

| Year | No. of subscribers | No. of events | Total attendance | Average attendance per event |
|---------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| 2002–03 | 37 | 11 | 714 | 65 |
| 2003–04 | 39 (-5%) | 8 | 582 (-18%) | 73 |
| 2004–05 | 48 (+23%) | 10 | 659 (+13%) | 66 |
| 2005–06 | 40 (-16%) | 10 | 974 (+48%) | 97 |
| 2006–07 | 51 (+27.5%) | 10 | 725 (-26%) | 73 |
| 2007–08 | 48 (-5.8%) | 8 | 752 (+3.6%) | 94 |

Note: Bracket represents percentage change on previous year.

issues. Two sessions were held during the year:

- Parliamentary Committees, held in July and attended by 11 senior executives
- Strategic communications, held in September and attended by 14 senior executives.

Ministerial conversations series

The *Ministerial conversations* series provided agency heads and senior executives with the opportunity to hear directly from ministers on their current policy perspectives, and their expectations of the public service in implementing government policy in a whole-of-government context.

The Commission facilitated one *Ministerial conversations* series event where the Hon. Joe Hockey, MP, then Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, discussing new direction for the APS.

Caretaker conventions seminars

The importance of APS employees understanding their responsibilities when caretaker arrangements begin is paramount, particularly with respect to the role of the APS as an apolitical service. During the caretaker period, the Government is still the Government but, by convention, a number of important constraints come into operation. Their primary purpose is to avoid actions that will bind an incoming government.

In the lead-up to the federal election in November, the Commission co-hosted—with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the then Department of Finance and Administration—a series of Caretaker Convention Seminars for APS employees, including an address by the Commissioner to Treasury delegates. More than 686 participants, including senior

executives, attended nine seminars, with four delivered in Canberra and one each in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth between July and September.

The seminars provided:

- guidance on APS employees' responsibilities under the conventions for the handling of business during the caretaker period
- discussion of some of the tasks APS employees could be asked to do, and to identify some of the challenges and ramifications that may arise
- focus on the importance of the APS Values and Code of Conduct for guidance.



The Hon. Kevin Rudd, MP, Prime Minister of Australia and Ms Lynelle Briggs, the Australian Public Service Commissioner, April 2008

Special event—The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister of Australia

On 30 April 2008, the Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister of Australia outlined the Government's policy priorities for the future and the importance of the public service in implementing the reform agenda. The Prime Minister addressed 828 senior public servants in the Great Hall, Parliament House. He discussed the seven elements of the Government's vision for the future Australian Public Service, including reinvigorating the Westminster tradition of an independent public service with merit-based selection processes and continuity of employment when governments change. These seven



Secretaries attending the presentation by the Prime Minister, April 2008

Pic. Gary Ramage © Newspix / News Ltd

elements provide senior executives with a comprehensive framework for the Government's agenda for the public service.

Events outside Canberra

The Commission's regional offices continue to maintain a strong facilitation role in promoting effective leadership with senior staff in the regions through various groups and activities.

Annual conferences of senior staff are held in most regions and Commission staff perform an important role in planning and supporting such events. Themes included:

- *Learning from leaders*
- *Think global, act local*
- *Doing the right things right: good decision making and governance*
- *Building capability through collaboration.*

The conferences featured speakers from the APS, state and local government and the private sector including the Minister for Housing and Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, MP; the Commissioner; Commonwealth Ombudsman, Professor John McMillan; Director General, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, Ms Robyn Kruk; the Hon. Kim Beazley, MP; Director, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Dr Fiona Stanley; Queensland

Magistrate, Di Fingleton; and winter olympic gold medallist, Steven Bradbury.

The Commissioner delivered State of the Service briefings in all capital cities and Townsville. In conjunction with these briefings, she held meetings with senior staff in the regions, providing an opportunity for discussion of the new Government's agenda.

The new *Linking leaders* series supports the Commission's priority of promoting a leadership culture and a professional senior executive cadre in the APS. The series aims to provide an opportunity for regional SES to network and engage in strategic discussions about APS-wide challenges and future public sector reform.

Other events outside Canberra during the year included:

- an executive briefing in Adelaide with Dr Peter Shergold AC, leading a discussion on key issues and future challenges facing the public sector
- an executive breakfast in Perth with Dr Peter van Onselen providing a political analysis of the changes facing agencies and the challenges for the government of the day
- an executive briefing in Hobart, in collaboration with the Australian Human Resources Institute, the Commissioner discussed trends in government learning and development.

Valedictory lectures

The Commission's valedictory lecture events provide retiring Departmental Secretaries with the opportunity to reflect and share insights and experiences with their Secretary, agency head and senior executive colleagues.

In February, the Commission coordinated a valedictory lecture for the retiring Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister

and Cabinet, Dr Peter Shergold AC. Two hundred and eighty-four APS agency heads and senior executives listened to Dr Shergold speak about his public sector experiences, achievements and perspectives.

Executive Leadership Dimensions

The Commission launched a new Executive Level 2 residential programme *Executive leadership dimensions* in January. The programme is a key component of the Commission's renewed emphasis on building SES feeder group capability. Recent State of the Service reports have identified this as a priority for all APS agencies as a large percentage of the SES are mature aged workers who are likely to be considering retirement in the next few years.

The programme focuses on practical aspects of leadership in the APS and provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on their professional role and engage in a challenging and collegiate learning environment. It focuses on contemporary behaviours needed to be a highly effective Executive Level 2 leader.

Five residential and two semi-residential programmes attracted 139 participants. The semi-residential format was introduced to provide participants with an alternative daytime opportunity to attend. The residential received excellent feedback; participants said the course provided invaluable insight into the skills required of an Executive Level 2 officer. Participants felt the programme also gave them relevant and practical tools, including strategies for performance management and influencing and managing people.

Integrated Leadership System

The Integrated Leadership System forms the basis of many of the Commission's development programmes. The system

describes the leadership capabilities and behaviours expected of all APS levels and is supported by a range of tools to help agencies and individuals implement the system in their workplaces.

The Commission provided information sessions and presentations on the system to Centrelink conferences, the Department of the Senate, a public sector conference in Canberra, a Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management conference in Ghana, human resources managers from the Pacific region, and to visiting delegations from Thailand and Vietnam.

Free information sessions about the Integrated Leadership System will be conducted during 2008–09. See also <www.apsc.gov.au/ils>.

Leadership Development Network

The Commission coordinates a Canberra-based Leadership Development Network to build better practice in leadership development by sharing ideas on the diversity of leadership approaches across the public sector. The network runs a series of breakfast seminars and an annual forum to explore current issues and trends in leadership and leadership development.

The Commission chairs and supports the Network Steering Group that oversees decisions on topics, speakers and the overall direction of the network. The steering group includes members from a range of agencies.

During 2007–08 presentations to the Leadership Development Network were:

- Annual forum—Talent and succession management
- Investing in Leadership Development—Are we getting value for money?

- Managing talent through better career design
- How to motivate, attract and retain Generations X and Y.

Career Development Assessment Centre

The Career Development Assessment Centre offers excellent leadership development opportunities to high-performing Executive Level 2 staff. The ongoing success of the programme provides a benchmark for the Commission's wider renewed focus on strengthening the leadership capability of the SES feeder group.

The Commission delivered 13 Career Development Assessment Centre programmes during the year to 145 participants. Staff from the Australian Taxation Office (17), Department of Defence (15) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (12) participated extensively in the programmes.

Feedback from participants continues to be positive, with all three performance measures exceeding the target of 90%.

The success of the centre depends on the support agencies provide, including provision of observers. Observers play a crucial role in bringing their experienced perspectives and contributing to the rigorous assessment process. The Commission successfully conducted observer training, with 19 new SES Band 2s and SES Band 3s trained.

OUTPUT 2.2 PROGRAMME DELIVERY

The Commission offers leadership, learning and development programmes that build the knowledge, capabilities, skills and behaviours that departments and agencies require of their employees in the modern APS environment. In meeting these expectations, the programmes also help individuals further pursue their APS career aspirations.

Important achievements contributing to the Programme Delivery output included the release of the APS Induction e-learning modules; strong growth in the participation in programmes for SES, EL and APS 1–6, the *Taste of Government* event for graduates, the launch of a new mini-series for APS 5–6 and ELs on contemporary challenges facing the APS, and the achievement of Registered Training Organisation accreditation.

SES orientation

The Commission delivered its three-day *SES orientation* programme 15 times during 2007–08 (Table 13). The programme not only provides new senior executives with the information they need to operate effectively in the APS environment but also gives them an opportunity to build valuable networks with their peers. The programme is aligned with the capabilities identified in the Integrated Leadership System. Topics covered include accountability, governance and the relationship between Ministers and the APS.

During the programme SES officers are exposed to guest speakers such as heads of agencies, senior officers from Ministers'

TABLE 12: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 2.2 PROGRAMME DELIVERY

| Target | Result |
|--|---|
| Quantity | |
| Number of programmes delivered—target is 919 | Exceeded. 2371 programmes were delivered. |

| | |
|---|---|
| SES expertise short programmes Percentage of new entrants to the SES attending an orientation in the first 1–3 years—target is 100%. | Not achieved. 69% of new entrants to the SES attended an SES orientation in the first 1–3 years. However, this is an improvement on the result of the previous financial year (which was 54%). |
| Quality | |
| APS 1–6 and Executive Level programmes Percentage of responding participants who when surveyed give a rating 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale for: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieving objectives | <p>Achieved for APS 1–6 programmes. 89% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale</p> <p>Not achieved for EL programmes. 81% gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. The Commission has updated marketing material to closer reflect programme content.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme content | <p>Achieved for APS 1–6 programmes. 88% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale</p> <p>Achieved for EL programmes. 86% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality of presenters. | <p>Achieved for APS 1–6 programmes. 94% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale</p> <p>Achieved for EL programmes. 91% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale</p> |
| Target is 85%. | |
| SES expertise short programmes Percentage of responding participants who when surveyed give a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale for: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieving objectives | Mostly achieved. 84% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. This is a slight improvement on the previous financial year (which was 78%) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme content | Mostly achieved. 84% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. This is a slight improvement on the previous financial year (which was 79%) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality of presenters. | Mostly achieved. 83% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. This is a slight improvement on the previous financial year (which was 81%) |
| Target is 85%. | |
| Consultancy Services—client satisfaction Percentage of responding surveyed clients who used services provided direct to agencies by brokering delivery from the panel who give an average rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale, for how well the programme was: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tailored and delivered | Achieved. 100% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordinated and administered. | Achieved. 91% of respondents gave a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale. |
| Target is 85%. | |
| Achieve accreditation as a Registered Training Organisation | Achieved. |
| Estimated price: \$8.553 million | Actual: \$9.773 million |

offices, and executive assistants who work for SES officers. Two hundred and thirty five senior executives attended the orientation programmes, representing 69% of newly appointed SES.

APS induction

Ensuring new employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to work effectively in the APS environment is essential.

The APS Induction e-learning modules were developed by the Commission in 2006–07 and distributed to all APS agencies via CD-ROM in July 2007. The modules have recently been updated and can be accessed either directly from the Commission’s website or by downloading to an intranet site or learning management system.

APS Induction equips new starters with a broad understanding of the APS relationship with the Australian Government, the Parliament and the public. The programme aims to provide new employees with the wider APS contextual knowledge they need to be effective public servants.

The Commission also offers APS Induction as a facilitated 4.5-hour training programme. The Commission conducted 10 public and in-house iterations of APS Induction in Canberra during the year. See also <www.apsc.gov.au/apsinduction>.



The Australian Public Service Commissioner, Ms Lynelle Briggs; the Special Minister of State, the Hon. John Faulkner and the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Terry Moran AO.



Graduate development

Development of graduates remains an important focus for the Commission’s learning and development products, events and services. The Commission provides opportunities to graduates to increase their knowledge and enhance their skills and contribution within the APS.

The *Graduate update* series, the annual *A taste of Government* seminar, and the APS 1–6 development programmes continued to

TABLE 13: ATTENDANCE AT SENIOR EXECUTIVE ORIENTATION PROGRAMME, 2003–04 TO 2007–08

| Year | Total participants | Total events |
|---------|--------------------|--------------|
| 2003–04 | 110 | 7 |
| 2004–05 | 67 (-39%) | 5 |
| 2005–06 | 164 (+144%) | 11 |
| 2006–07 | 222 (+35%) | 15 |
| 2007–08 | 235(+6%) | 15 |

Note: Figures in brackets represent percentage change on previous year.

be popular. Agencies view these events and programmes as an important component of a well-rounded graduate year in the APS.

This year the *A taste of Government* seminar enjoyed increased interest; a record number of 670 graduates attended in April, compared with 617 graduates in 2006–07. The Special Minister of State, the Hon. John Faulkner; the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Terry Moran AO; and the Australian Public Service Commissioner, Ms Lynelle Briggs presented the seminar. See also <www.apsc.gov.au/apslearn>.

APS 1–6 programmes

The Commission provides a national, comprehensive and coordinated suite of leadership, learning and development programmes, events and services for APS 1–6 staff. Overall, at 30 June 2007, the APS 1–6 cohort accounted for 73.4% of ongoing employees in the APS. The Commission ensures that the APS 1–6 suite of programmes is current and topical and helps provide APS agencies and their employees with the capability to deliver government priorities, objectives and outcomes.

In Canberra, 167 APS 1–6 programmes were delivered attracting 2707 participants. This represents an overall increase of 24.5% in the overall number of programmes delivered and an increase of 24.5% in numbers of participants.

In 2007–08 the most popular programmes were:

- *Essential writing for APS 5–6 levels*
- *Essential writing for APS 1–4 levels*
- *Strategic thinking*
- *Minute taking skills*
- *Policy formulation and advice—introduction.*

Early in 2008, the Commissioner addressed APS 5–6 staff members highlighting the key findings and future challenges for the target audience and for the APS as identified in the State of the Service Report. See also <www.apsc.gov.au/apslearn>.

Executive Level programmes

The Commission delivered 103 Executive Level programmes in Canberra that attracted 1639 participants. This is an increase of 38.9% in the overall number of programmes delivered compared to last year and an increase of 33.2% in numbers of participants.

The most popular programmes were:

- *Shaping strategic thought*
- *Executive Level 1 transition*
- *Management essentials*
- *APS job applications and interview skills—applying for jobs at the Executive Level*
- The *EL update* series offered in Canberra continued to be popular with 244 participants at three sessions covering a range of topics.

See also <www.apsc.gov.au/ellearn>.

Confronting Contemporary Challenges

The Commission launched a new mini-series for APS 5–6 and Executive Levels on the contemporary government challenges of *Changing behaviour*, *Agency health*, *Tackling wicked problems* and *Building better governance*.

The Commission held seminars in May and June respectively on:

- *Changing behaviour*—the seminar focused on ways to achieve behavioural change in the public policy context. Thirty-five participants listened to senior

executive Virginia Hart from the Department of Health and Ageing present insights from behavioural change theory and evidence.

- *Agency health*—54 participants listened to Acting Deputy Public Service Commissioner, Ms Annwyn Godwin and Acting Deputy Secretary, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Ms Alison Larkins, presenting both theoretical and practical insights into key indicators of corporate health, characteristics of high and poor performing organisations, and strategies for monitoring and assessing health.

The Commission will hold the *Tackling wicked problems* and *Building better governance* seminars in 2008–09. See also Output 3.4—Research and evaluation for more information.

Consultancy services

The Commission’s Leadership, Learning and Development Panel includes more than 115 leading corporate management consultancy firms with public and private sector expertise. The Commission, through the Panel, cost-effectively customises programmes and services to meet specific needs of agencies.

Agencies have access to a range of tested and experienced providers of high quality leadership, learning and development products within the public service context. Approximately 40 agencies received 1491 services during the year (Table 14). All clients who responded to survey questions rated tailoring and delivery as a 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale; and 91% rated coordination and administration as a 5 or 6 on the same scale.

Significant achievements included:

- Supporting the International Coaching Federation’s *Canberra coaching week*, where Commission staff attended a discussion panel and gave a presentation on ‘doing business with government’.
- Working in partnership with a number of agencies, including the Departments of Health and Ageing; Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Services and Local Government to help deliver their in-house training calendars.
- Continuing work with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to finalise its Visa Transformation Strategy, identified as a client service improvement project that had a significant impact on

TABLE 14: CONSULTANCY SERVICE PROGRAMMES PRESENTED, 2006–08

| Programme | No. of programmes presented | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| | 2006–07 | 2007–08 |
| Writing skills | 183 | 122 |
| Leadership/management skills | 137 | 220 |
| Procurement and contract management | 91 | 60 |
| Project management | 66 | 45 |
| Programme management | 63 | 82 |
| Coaching services | 56 | 71 |
| Policy | 55 | 135 |
| Other consultancy services | 546 | 756 |
| Total | 1197 | 1491 |

that department's State and Territory service delivery network.

The volume of key programmes presented in 2007–08 has increased significantly from the previous year, as has the number of other consultancy services (in-house or agency-specific consultancies). This is largely due to an increased demand from agencies to meet their requirements in the areas of leadership, learning and development coupled with strengthened promotion by the Commission. See also <www.apsc.gov.au/learn/custom.htm>.

In-house programmes

The Commission offers in-house delivery of core programmes to meet the particular needs of agencies in a flexible and cost-effective manner. The programmes may include tailoring to address agency-specific challenges and procedures. Facilitators from the Canberra office delivered 54 in-house training programmes on a range of areas relating to induction, APS Values and Code of Conduct, recruitment processes (for applicants and selection panels), and promoting harassment-free workplaces. The two most popular programmes were *Getting that selection right* and *APS job applications and interview skills: applying for jobs up to the APS 6 level*.

Registered Training Organisation

The Commission gained accreditation as a registered training organisation in May 2008.

Featured Highlight

REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION

The ACT Accreditation and Registration Council granted the Commission accreditation as a registered training organisation in May 2008. The Commission started operations as a registered training organisation from 1 July 2008.

The Commission will initially offer recognition services for the Certificate IV in Government and the Diploma of Government from the *Public Sector Training Package*. In the longer term, the Commission will offer nationally recognised training and will expand its range of qualifications to meet the needs of the APS.



Programmes outside Canberra

During 2007–08, the Commission delivered 151 calendar programmes in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Darwin and Perth and other locations outside Canberra. Topics presented included financial management, writing skills, strategic thinking and the Integrated Leadership System. This reflects a significant increase in demand for calendar programmes compared to the previous year.

Staff in regional offices also negotiated and arranged for delivery of 317 in-house programmes to APS and Commonwealth agencies. There was a downturn in the number of requests from agencies for these services compared to the previous year, which in part is attributed to reduced discretionary expenditure during the post election and pre Budget periods.

Often facilitated by Commission staff, the in-house programmes covered the APS Values and the Code of Conduct, staff selection and recruitment, assessing leadership capabilities and the prevention of workplace bullying and harassment. There was a significant increase in requests from agencies for delivery of programmes covering APS Values and the Code of Conduct, which is a positive reflection of their commitment to ensuring employees understand their obligations and supports the Government's focus on integrity and accountability.

OUTPUT 2.3 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

The Commission's role in providing, or helping to provide, national and international programmes continued to be high-level and strategic during 2007–08.

Domestically, the Commission continued to be involved in the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, the Public

Sector Management Programme, and the *Public Sector Training Package*.

Internationally, the Commission delivered two outstanding Leading Australia's Future in Asia programmes and, in conjunction with the Canada School of Public Service and the United Kingdom National School of Government, developed the Leadership Across Borders programme; the Australian module was successfully delivered in Sydney in June 2008.

The successful Leading Australia's Future in Asia programme conducted in the Pacific and the introduction of the Leadership Across Borders programme were significant achievements contributing to this output.

Leading Australia's Future in Asia

Leading Australia's Future in Asia (LAFIA) brings together senior executives from the Australian, and State and Territory public services to increase their understanding of significant change drivers in the region. The study programmes include meetings with government officials, and business and community leaders. LAFIA aims to:

- provide background and context for the international dimension of senior executive responsibilities
- enable senior executives to respond strategically to changes in the Asia–Pacific region
- develop networks and contacts among Australian participants and with their overseas equivalents.

In 2007–08 the Commission led one LAFIA programme in the Pacific. Nineteen senior leaders undertook a two-week study of Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Samoa.

LAFIA exposes participants to a range of high-level business, government and academic leaders, both in Australia and

overseas. The Commission works closely with Australian diplomatic representatives, supporting participants to gain a better understanding of how the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s whole-of-government engagement works. The Crawford School of Economics and

Government at the Australian National University provides the academic content for the programme.

Leadership Across Borders Programme

The Leadership Across Borders programme is a groundbreaking international leadership

TABLE 15: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 2.3 NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

| Target | Result |
|--|--|
| Quantity | |
| Number of Leading Australia’s Future in Asia (LAFIA) programmes delivered—target is three per annum. | Not achieved. One LAFIA programme was conducted in 2007–08. This programme involved a study tour to Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Samoa during the period 18 August–2 September 2007. The two remaining programmes were deferred as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction and viability of the proposed LAFIA Northern Hemisphere programme has not yet been considered by the Leadership and Learning Advisory Committee. • The timing of the LAFIA Asia programme was rescheduled to take place from 1–22 July 2008. |
| Number of Australia and New Zealand School of Government Board meetings the Commission attends and at which the Commission provides the Commonwealth perspective—target is 75% of meetings held. | The Commissioner stepped down from the ANZSOG Board in December 2005. The Australian Government’s perspective was provided by the Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet during 2006–07 and in future will be undertaken by the Secretary of the Department of Finance and Deregulation who was recently appointed to the Board. |
| Number of Public Sector Management Programmes Board meetings for which the Commission provides secretariat services—target is one Board Meeting and one conference. | Exceeded. The Commission provided secretariat services for three board meetings and one conference. |
| Number of Government Industry Skills Council meetings at which the Commission contributes the Commonwealth perspective—target is 75% of meetings held. | Exceeded. Commission representatives contributed to 100% of Government Skills Australia (GSA) meetings. |
| Quality | |
| Percentage of responding LAFIA participants who when surveyed indicate a high level of satisfaction with the programme and give a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale for: | |
| • achieving objectives | Exceeded. 100% of respondents |
| • programme content | Exceeded. 100% of respondents |
| • programme coordination and administration. | Achieved. While a specific percentage result is unable to be identified, direct feedback provided by clients indicates a high level of satisfaction by participants with the LAFIA programme. |
| Target is 85%. | |
| Estimated price: \$1.902 million | Actual price: \$1.458 million |

initiative, designed for senior public leaders working within a Westminster system. The Commission (also representing New Zealand), the Canada School of Public Service and the United Kingdom National School of Government collaborated to create this exciting programme. With week long modules in each of the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada the programme will create a unique network of high-potential senior leaders covering both hemispheres.

The inaugural programme was launched in February 2008 and attracted 10 Australian, two New Zealander, 12 Canadian and 12 United Kingdom SES Band 2 (equivalent) participants.

Australia and New Zealand School of Government

The Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) is a first-tier professional school established collaboratively in 2002 by a consortium of Australian and New Zealand governments, universities and business schools to help develop the skills of those destined to be leaders in the public sector.

Governance

The Australian Government is a foundation member of ANZSOG. Following the departure of Dr Peter Shergold as ANZSOG Board Chair, Australian Government representation on the Board remained vacant. Dr Ian Watt, Secretary for the Department of Finance and Deregulation, became the Government's representative in July. Dr Ken Henry, Secretary to the Department of the Treasury, continues as Chair of the ANZSOG Research Committee.

An academic board is responsible for encouraging and maintaining the highest possible standards in curriculum and teaching in ANZSOG's programmes.

Teaching

The Commission, in consultation with other agencies, continues to help ANZSOG ensure it meets APS needs by providing high quality, high profile programmes that represent value for money. The Australian Government has met its commitment to fund 20 and 30 places, respectively, on ANZSOG's annual flagship teaching programmes until 2008. The programmes are:

- *Executive Fellows Programme*, a three-week residential for SES Band 2 and 3 employees, in 2007 attracted 80 participants from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific; 22.5% were from the APS.
- *Executive Masters of Public Administration*, a two-year part-time programme for high-performing Executive Level 2 staff and equivalents. In 2008, 137 new students began the programme; 22.6% were APS employees. The programme's core subjects are taught in five-day residential blocks in various Australian and New Zealand locations.

The level of participant satisfaction with ANZSOG teaching programmes in 2007–08 was high.

Research

The ANZSOG Research Committee coordinates the school's research priorities. The Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, Dr Ken Henry, is the Australian Government representative on, and chair of, the research committee. The committee contributes to continued public sector reform by supporting development and transmission of good practice in policy and management. It also informs debate on key issues in public administration and maintains the quality and relevance of ANZSOG's teaching programme.

The Australian Government's financial support for ANZSOG research continued through previously established mechanisms, namely:

- A \$10 million grant (governed by a deed of agreement) was made to the ANZSOG Foundation in May 2005. Interest generated is used to support the Sir John Bunting Chair of Public Administration at the Australian National University and other academic appointments to develop research activities. Effective financial and qualitative reporting requirements have been developed with ANZSOG consistent with the deed of agreement, and a full account of how the interest for each financial year has been spent is provided annually to the Commission.
- The Australian Government committed to provide \$200,000 per year for three years between 2003 and 2006 to support ANZSOG's research capacity. The Australian National University matched this funding. In 2006–07, the APS Management Advisory Committee (MAC) provided funding for ANZSOG's research programme through a \$200,000 grant with the cost being shared equally between MAC agencies. The two ANZSOG research projects approved by MAC in 2006–07 are currently being finalised. The first project relates to the role of central agencies in government strategy formulation across ANZSOG jurisdictions. The second focuses on attraction, recruitment and retention in the APS, including succession planning.

In early 2008, ANZSOG released a paper, *Australia under construction: nation-building past, present and future*, drawn from the *Governing by looking back* conference held at

the Australian National University in December 2007.

Public Sector Management Programme

The Public Sector Management Programme targets motivated middle to senior managers, at the APS 6, Executive Level 1 and 2 and equivalent levels in other Australian public sector jurisdictions, to provide them with broader skills for use at their present level as well as those needed for more senior positions. The Commission coordinates Australian Government, State and Territory participation by providing secretariat services to a board of management that oversees the programme.

A 2006–07 evaluation of the programme found that enrolment and completion rates had declined. As a result, the Commission helped raise awareness of the programme throughout the APS, which has resulted in increased enrolments. The secretariat's leadership in developing a national marketing framework and reviewing the curriculum continues to strengthen the programme's reputation and relevance.

Public Sector Training Package

The *Public Sector Training Package* provides the basic building blocks for the vocational education and training system to respond to the public sector's training needs. It provides individuals with clear skills and career pathways through recognised national qualifications and gives Commonwealth agencies access to the National Training Framework. Government Skills Australia, the industry skills council for government and community safety, maintains the training package. The Commission represents the Commonwealth on the Public Sector Industry Advisory Committee, the authoritative and representative voice advising Government Skills Australia and

the Government on public sector vocational and educational training needs.

The Commission actively promotes the training package to APS agencies as an important learning and development option. The Commission's accreditation as a registered training organisation means that as at 1 July 2008 it can provide nationally accredited training programmes and skills recognition across government agencies. The Commission is using qualifications and competencies from the *Public Sector Training Package* to design assessment pathways, recognition tools and accredited training programmes.

OUTPUT 3 BETTER PRACTICE AND EVALUATION

Output 3 derives from the Public Service Commissioner's statutory role set out in sections 41 and 44 of the *Public Service Act 1999*. The Commission's Better Practice and Evaluation Groups contribute to enhanced APS performance by preparing the Commissioner's annual State of the Service Report to Parliament and by conducting evaluation and research into current challenges facing the APS. Both Groups promote and advise on better practice approaches to governance, agency performance and people management. Ongoing research and secretariat support to the Management Advisory Committee and Public Service Commissioners' conferences is also provided.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Commission's achievements under Output 3 continued to support agencies in improving strategic people management practices and overall organisational capability, through providing better practice advice and information on key challenges facing APS agencies.

The Commission's achievements under Output 3 included:

- developed and delivered the first National Conference of Indigenous Employees in the APS drawing 140 delegates from 50 agencies
- delivered 27 development workshops to over 390 Indigenous employees across the country
- developed and launched the *Indigenous scholarship programme*
- coordinated the *Indigenous pathways recruitment* programme for graduates, cadets and trainees
- developed and implemented the *Indigenous mentoring* programme for trainees
- established the *Indigenous Pathways alumni*
- finalised two new better practice tools for agencies on *Succession planning and leading productive people*
- piloted a whole-of-APS recruitment campaign targeting finance and accounting skills
- published the *State of the Service Report 2006–07* with special emphasis on key challenges facing the APS, including agency health and agency culture, new ways of doing business, modernising APS employment, interactions with Government, and leadership
- conducted a rolling series of information sessions on the *State of the Service Report 2006–07* to disseminate results among APS leaders and employees
- produced four publications in the new *Contemporary Government Challenges series*—*Agency health: monitoring agency health and improving performance*; *Building better governance*; *Tackling wicked problems: a public policy perspective*; and *Changing behaviour: a public policy perspective*
- maintained the APS Employment Database (APSED) for use in the State of the Service Report and specific-purpose projects
- enhanced the APS Employment Database Internet Interface (APSEDII)
- provided ongoing secretariat support to the Management Advisory Committee and assisted with preparation of its report, *Note for file: a report on recordkeeping in the Australian Public Service*, which was released in August.

PRICE FOR OUTPUT 3

The total price for Output 3 in 2007–08 was \$9.567 million. This was \$0.008 million lower than the estimated price of \$9.575 million published in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2007–08.

OUTPUT 3.1 INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

Employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the APS helps achieve government policy development and programme and service delivery goals. It also contributes towards achieving social and economic equity for Indigenous Australians.

Continuing to foster Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in both mainstream and Indigenous-specific areas in the APS through strategies to attract, recruit, develop and retain Indigenous employees remained a top priority for the Commission. The vehicle for this has been through implementation of the APS employment and capability strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Achievements against Output 3.1 enabled the Commission to contribute significantly to the stabilisation of Indigenous employment numbers in the APS, and to work closely with agencies on improving employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Key achievements under Output 3.1 were the National Conference of Indigenous Employees in the APS, the expansion of our pathways initiatives and establishment of the *Indigenous pathways alumni*, and the successful Indigenous Career Trek workshops delivered nationally to over 390 Indigenous employees.

Implementing the APS Indigenous employment strategy

The *APS employment and capability strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees* was implemented in August 2005 with funding of \$6.4 million until 30 June 2008. In the 2008 Budget the Government announced extension of the strategy to 30 June 2009 with a further \$2.6 million provided to support its activities.

The strategy aims to increase employment and career development opportunities in the APS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians; it was structured on the themes of:

- supporting whole-of-government work on Indigenous policies and programmes
- developing pathways to APS employment
- supporting Indigenous employees in the APS
- supporting agencies to be good employers of Indigenous employees
- developing partnerships.

This year an evaluation of the strategy, conducted under Department of Finance and Deregulation guidelines, indicated the Commission had made significant and measurable progress toward meeting the strategy objectives.

The evaluation found the strategy had been instrumental in stabilising Indigenous employment levels in the APS and mobilising agencies to focus on Indigenous employment issues and strategies. It also suggested areas where the Commission could consolidate existing achievements.

The evaluation recommended extending the strategy to maintain the momentum in Indigenous employment and highlighted the important leadership role the Commission is playing. Good feedback was provided by both

agencies and Indigenous staff through the evaluation process. While key issues continue to exist around the opportunities for regional employment and retention, it is clear that the strategy has established the groundwork for building positive outcomes in the future.

The Commission will consider the associated recommendations in the context of the Budget cycle for the period beyond 30 June 2009.

TABLE 16: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 3.1 INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

| Target | Result |
|---|---|
| Quantity | |
| 1. Medium and long-term strategies developed and implemented to support employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the APS. | Achieved. Strategies under the <i>APS employment and capability strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees</i> have been extended for another 12 months and planning has begun on a replacement strategy to take effect from 1 July 2009. |
| 2. Number of agencies involved in initiatives to increase the knowledge, skills and capacity of Indigenous employees and their employers across the APS. | Achieved. 50 agencies participated in the APS National Indigenous Employees Conference. 40 agencies participated in <i>Indigenous career trek</i> . Nine agencies participated in the Horizons secondment programme. |
| 3. Satisfaction with levels of access to support networks and development programmes, as measured by response to annual State of the Service employee surveys | Achieved. The <i>State of the Service Report 2006–07</i> data indicated that 54% of Indigenous employees were satisfied with their access to learning and development. Although this was lower than the APS overall (60%), the low number of Indigenous respondents means that drawing meaningful conclusions concerning the apparent comparative data is problematic. Nonetheless, this is an issue that will remain a key focus of the employment and capability strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. During the financial year the number of Indigenous APS Employee Networks (IAPSENs) has expanded to cover Alice Springs, and discussions commenced with a view to establishing networks in the Torres Strait and Tasmania. Access to IAPSEN activities has also been improved by the establishment of a dedicated IAPSEN website sponsored by the Australian Public Service Commission. |
| 4. Agencies' implementation of strategies has a positive impact on engagement and separation rates of Indigenous employees – target is proportional representation consistent with the wider APS workplace and community. | Partly achieved. The <i>State of the Service Report 2006–07</i> reported an encouraging decline in the separation rates for Indigenous employees from 4.2% to 3.5% in 2006–07. In the same period, the engagement rate for Indigenous staff rose from 1.8% to 2.7% and the number of Indigenous employees engaged during the year increased from 372 to 513. |
| Quality | |
| 1. Levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee satisfaction with working in the APS—target is an increase compared to the State of the Service Report timeline data. | Partly achieved. The <i>State of the Service Report 2006–07</i> reported that the overall job satisfaction levels of Indigenous staff trailed those of other staff. In 2006–07, 75% of Indigenous employees were on average satisfied with their most important job satisfaction attributes. This was substantially lower than the previous year (86%) and lower than for the APS overall (81%). It was, however, still higher than the same measure in earlier years and is, therefore, still an increase on the timeline data. These figures should be treated with some caution as Indigenous job satisfaction results have been very volatile over the life of the employee survey and are likely to reflect the relatively small number of Indigenous employees in the sample. |
| 2. Levels of agency participation in cross-agency and cross-jurisdictional projects. | Achieved. 33 agencies participated in the graduate programme, 23 in the National Indigenous Cadetship Programme and 10 in the entry level recruitment programme. |
| Estimated price: \$4.663 million | Actual: \$4.886 million |

Supporting whole-of-government initiatives

The Commission supports whole-of-government initiatives in Indigenous employment by working with other APS agencies on mentoring and networking programmes, and national conferences and workshops.

Mentoring programme

In 2006–07 the Commission piloted a mentoring programme matching selected Indigenous Coordination Centre managers with mentors at the SES Band 3 level from across the APS. Based on the positive feedback received, the Commission worked with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, to allocate mentors to the remaining Indigenous Coordination Centre managers early in 2007–08.

National Indigenous Employees Conference

The Commission sponsored and organised the first National Conference of Indigenous Employees in the APS in May 2008.

Through a series of facilitated workshops, delegates were given an opportunity to identify potential strategies to support employment of Indigenous Australians in the APS. The outcomes of the conference and workshop discussions will inform directions for future action under the APS Indigenous employment strategy.

Featured Highlight

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEES CONFERENCE

The Commission sponsored and organised the first National Conference of Indigenous Employees in the APS in May 2008. The conference examined a range of issues relevant to Indigenous employees.

The conference attracted 140 delegates from 50 Commonwealth agencies across the country, from entry level recruits through to agency heads. They came together to consider the state of Indigenous employment in the APS and identify areas for future action, including skills and capacity development, and approaches to cultural competency in the workplace.

The conference was addressed by a number of speakers including the Cabinet Secretary, the Hon. Senator John Faulkner; the Public Service Commissioner, Ms Lynelle Briggs; and the Secretary of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Dr Jeff Harmer.

Delegates also heard reports from participants at the Australia 2020 and the Youth 2020 Summits. These included presentations from Dr Peter Buckskin, Dean and Head of School, David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research, University of South Australia; Mr Steven Larkin, Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies; and Ms Jessica Graham, a member of the Commission's own staff.

Feedback from delegates and speakers has been overwhelmingly positive and the Commission plans to make conferences of this kind an annual event.



Learning and development

Through the *Indigenous career trek* initiative the Commission has delivered APS Career Management workshops to 392 Indigenous employees across Australia. During these workshops the need for APS employees to work in a whole-of-government way is highlighted, the skills needed to perform in this way are explored and participants are encouraged to include developing whole-of-government capability as part of their career management and advancement strategies.

Whole-of-government working is further promoted and supported through various events and networking opportunities the Commission provides to Indigenous graduates, cadets and trainees recruited through the *Pathways* programme.

Developing pathways to APS employment

The Commission partnered with various APS agencies to deliver three recruitment programmes for Indigenous graduate, cadet and entry-level positions. Support programmes and services to these recruits were increased to enhance short- to medium-term retention prospects.

Through the *Indigenous graduate recruitment* programme, the Commission recruited and placed 26 Indigenous graduates in 17 APS agencies. The Commission expects a similar number will be engaged through the 2009 intake which was advertised in May with 28 APS agencies involved.

The Commission also recruited and placed 35 Indigenous tertiary students in cadet positions with 15 agencies through its bulk recruitment initiative under the National Indigenous Cadetship Project. Applications for the fourth intake closed in June.

The *Indigenous entry level* programme provides a pathway to employment for

Indigenous Australians who do not have tertiary qualifications. This year the Commission recruited and placed 23 trainees across eight APS agencies through this programme and coordinated delivery of formal training towards a Certificate III or IV in Government for Indigenous participants engaged as entry-level recruits.

Pathways support programmes

To enhance short- and medium-term retention of new recruits and to promote a whole-of-government view in career planning and development, the Commission increased the support programmes it delivers to *Pathways* recruits. New initiatives developed and implemented included:

- a transition programme for incoming 2008 graduates to familiarise them with the APS environment, introduce them to Indigenous APS networks and orient them to Canberra and their home agencies
- a whole-of-government induction programme for 2008 graduates that provided a strategic overview of the structure and role of the APS and its relationship to government; keynote speakers included central agency heads, key ministerial advisors and senior Indigenous employees
- additional skills development in APS leadership, career management and communication
- training in mentoring for Indigenous APS employees who will act as mentor to new recruits
- establishment of an *Indigenous pathways alumni* in Canberra and Sydney.

To achieve these outcomes the Commission partnered with numerous APS agencies; see 'Supporting partnerships' on page 65.

Supporting Indigenous employees

The Commission delivered 27 professional development workshops across the country, launched a new range of scholarships to support career advancement, and established an *Indigenous pathways alumni* to support Indigenous employees in achieving their career goals and aspirations. As well it continued the *Horizons* programme and the work to support the Indigenous APS employee networks in each jurisdiction.

Indigenous career trek

Over 390 Indigenous employees attended the *Indigenous career trek* workshops during the year. The Commission delivered 11 workshops on APS career management skills to APS 1–6 employees, eight communication skills workshops to APS 1–4 employees, and eight workshops on influencing skills to APS 5 to Executive Level 1 employees. The programmes were extremely well received; 96% of evaluations rated the quality of the programme content, relevance and currency very highly.

Indigenous scholarship programme

The Commission launched the *Indigenous scholarship programme* in April. The programme provides access to higher-level study and development programmes for Indigenous employees at the APS 6 to Executive Levels and research/study opportunities for Indigenous members of the SES. Scholarships are available for

Indigenous participation in the Public Sector Management Programme, the Masters in Public Administration through ANZSOG, the Commission's *Leadership dimensions* programme and a fellowship opportunity at the senior executive level.

Scholarships based on merit will be awarded in the second half of 2008.

Horizons

In 2007–08, *Horizons* (the APS Indigenous secondment programme) facilitated six placements for Indigenous employees at the APS 4–6 levels in the Departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; Health and Ageing; Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; as well as the Australian Crime Commission and AusAID.

Horizons broadens the experience, skills and career progression opportunities for Indigenous employees and has, to date, facilitated 10 inter-agency secondments. The Commission provides *Horizons* participants with coaching, mentoring, development and network opportunities during their secondment to create stronger development and career progression outcomes. Participants' home agencies receive a scholarship grant of \$15,000 to help offset the costs of releasing staff for secondments.

Horizons will be expanded next year to offer secondment opportunities to Indigenous employees at the executive levels.



Indigenous career trek workshop: participants in Brisbane, 2008

Indigenous APS Employment Network

The Commission's commitment to improving employment outcomes for Indigenous staff is reflected in its support for the Indigenous APS Employment Network (IAPSEN).

Networks are currently located in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Darwin and Townsville. As well, an inaugural meeting between the Commission and other stakeholders in Alice Springs established support for a Central Australian IAPSEN and preliminary discussions are underway to establish a network in Tasmania.

The Commission supported two face-to-face meetings of the IAPSEN Chairs' Forum. These meetings highlight common issues across the APS and inform networks about regional issues.

In consultation with the network, the Commission launched a national website in May at the National Conference of Indigenous Employees in the APS. This site provides information on each network, provides contact and event information, and promotes the work of IAPSEN. It can be accessed at <www.apsc.gov.au/iapsen>.

The New South Wales IAPSEN was strengthened during the year by introduction of a small executive group to support the Chair and to drive a number of events-based initiatives. The Victorian IAPSEN organised a special screening of *My*

brother Vinnie at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image; and the Western Australian IAPSEN was involved in a NAIDOC week event that included a tour of the Aboriginal Art Gallery in Kings Park and a talk by prominent Indigenous artist, Norma MacDonald.

Supporting agencies to be good employers of Indigenous employees

Support for agencies includes running promotional campaigns to raise the profile of the APS as an employer, funding scholarship programmes and attending careers fairs and expos to promote the APS as employer of Indigenous people.

The Commission also provided assistance to agencies in direct form by helping with recruitment exercises, providing advice on request in relation to particular issues, and giving agencies guidance on the development of their own Indigenous employment strategies.

Public calling campaign

The Commission's successful *Public calling* promotional campaign continued to raise the profile of the APS as an employer of choice to Indigenous Australians.

Seven Indigenous employees from various agencies are the faces of the *Public calling* campaign and act as APS Indigenous career



Patrick Palmer (b.r. far left) and Lynne Tacy (f.r. centre) with APS Indigenous Career Ambassadors.

ambassadors. This year the ambassadors have helped deliver several promotional events and leading presentations, including playing a substantial role as facilitators in the National Conference of Indigenous Employees in the APS.

In June 2007 the Commission launched a three-month National Indigenous Radio Service campaign featuring the career and personal journey stories of the ambassadors complemented by a refreshed *Public calling* web interface featuring each of the ambassadors; see <www.apsc.gov.au/publiccalling>.

Preparations for another round of advertising were delayed due to the federal election and this campaign is now being negotiated for later in 2008.

Indigenous capability fund

The Commission implemented the *Indigenous capability fund* in 2006 to enhance access to development opportunities for Indigenous employees in small- to medium-sized agencies. A Commission review of the fund's performance in 2006–07 indicated that many agencies were, for various reasons, unable to apply the funding within the allotted financial period. As a result, the Commission revised the eligibility requirements for the fund in 2007–08.

Four agencies received funding during the year and the remaining funds were allocated to delivering free career development programmes and a range of scholarships for all ongoing APS Indigenous employees. More than 400 Indigenous employees have accessed these new opportunities indicating a more efficient and effective application of funds.

In 2008–09 the *Indigenous capability fund* will continue to be applied to deliver the *Indigenous career trek* programmes and the *Indigenous scholarship programme*.

Indigenous liaison officer

During the reporting period the Commission attended various careers fairs and job expos in Sydney, Darwin, Newcastle and Nowra to introduce the APS and promote it as an employer of choice to Indigenous Australians. Attendance at these functions was based substantially on a recognition that they would attract significant interest from Indigenous Australians in regions with a strong APS employment presence.

The Commission's Indigenous liaison officer met Indigenous staff and supervisors of Indigenous staff to discuss the APS, the assistance available in the *APS employment and capability strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees*, and to provide guidance on supervising Indigenous staff.

Supporting partnerships

Working collaboratively and creating productive partnerships continues to be a critical element of implementing the *APS employment and capability strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees*.

In 2007–08 the Commission collaborated with 35 agencies to deliver the *Pathways* graduate, cadetship and entry-level recruitment programmes; and with the Department of the Senate, central agencies, and the ACT Government to provide orientation and induction programmes for new recruits.

As well, the Commission maintained its partnership with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), in its new form, to coordinate the national APS bulk cadetship recruitment under that department's National Indigenous Cadetship Programme and to administer APS access to the Structured Training and Employment

Programme (STEP) to increase entry-level pathways to APS careers for Indigenous people without tertiary qualifications. In 2007–08, APS agencies independently recruited 62 Indigenous trainees and then applied, through the Commission, for access to STEP funding.

The Commission also partnered with Centrelink to deliver some aspects of the *Indigenous career trek* programmes. Centrelink provided trainers to join Commission staff to co-facilitate some programmes and assisted in coordinating access to training facilities in some locations outside Canberra.

OUTPUT 3.2 PROMOTE BETTER PRACTICE

In promoting better practice the Commission adopted a number of new initiatives in relation to people management, organisational capability, and an emerging

focus on attracting, recruiting and retaining employees.

Consultation with APS agencies remained a key component of developing and distributing relevant and high quality advice. There was also increased consultation with external stakeholders, particularly in relation to a number of the recruitment initiatives undertaken.

Achievements under Output 3.2 enabled the Commission to work strategically with agencies to continue to promote the APS as an employer of choice, and streamline the recruitment process. Key achievements under Output 3.2 were the release of the *Better faster* publication and the whole-of-APS recruitment campaign targeting finance and accountability skills.

TABLE 17: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 3.2 PROMOTE BETTER PRACTICE

| Target | Result |
|--|---|
| Quantity | |
| Number of better practice forums developed and offered: | |
| • Connect Government Series—estimate 4 | Under achieved. 2 Connect Government Series held |
| • HR Capability Programme—estimate 4 | Under achieved. 3 HR Capability Development programmes were completed and 3 commenced |
| • Commonwealth Management Forum meetings—estimate 2 | Achieved. 2 Forums were held. |
| • Development, networks and special events—estimate 62 | Exceeded. 74 activities were held comprising development workshops, networks and special events. |
| Quality | |
| 85% of responding participants, when surveyed, give a rating of 5 or 6 on a 6-point scale for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieving objectives • programme content • quality of presenters or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant • useful • high quality. | Achieved. Events were both formal and informal. Quantitative information collected for HR Capability Programme indicated a high quality. The agenda for the networks were determined according to the requirements of participants. Informal feedback was good or above. |
| Estimated price: \$2.016 million | Actual: \$1.737 million |

Attracting, recruiting and retaining skilled employees

The Commission continued to identify the need to recruit for specific professions and work with agencies to support them in addressing skills shortages. The Commission has undertaken significant work to attract, recruit and retain Indigenous employees at all levels under the *APS employment and capability strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees* (see Output 3.1). The *Finance Jobs* recruitment campaign is discussed below.

The Commission held a series of workshops, *Remaining ahead of the game*, around the country to promote its good practice guidance on streamlining recruitment practices and the new *APSjobs* website. These interactive workshops also provided senior people managers with the opportunity to share new initiatives and to network with colleagues dealing with similar issues. The Australian Taxation Office provided a case study on the measures it has adopted to attract accountants in the current labour market.

In Victoria, the Commission delivered sessions to the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and the Defence Materiel Organisation about managing unplanned absences which drew heavily on the Commission's publication, *Fostering an attendance culture*.

Finance jobs

Finance Jobs is part of a continuing effort to help agencies address shortages in particular skills.

Finance Jobs was a centralised recruitment exercise piloted in September 2007 to recruit experienced finance and accounting professionals from APS 3 to Executive Level 2 on behalf of 17 APS agencies. The initiative trialed an innovative recruitment method

with applications based on curricula vitae only. A single gazette advertisement attracted applications from more than 1000 candidates.

The approach has been refined to include a new online employment register, with a longer-term rolling recruitment campaign beginning in June.

Better faster

In August the Commission launched two publications aimed at streamlining recruitment and demystifying the APS job application processes. *Better, faster: streamlining recruitment in the APS* and *Cracking the code: how to apply for jobs in the Australian Public Service* are part of the Commission's comprehensive approach to improving the capability and performance of the APS through more effective recruitment and retention practices.

Better faster aims to streamline recruitment processes across the APS by helping agencies redesign and simplify their processes. It is targeted predominantly at human resource areas to help them understand the delays in their recruitment processes and ways those processes can be improved. To date, 1430 hard copies have been distributed, with the publication also available electronically on the Commission's website. See <www.apsc.gov.au/publications07/betterfaster.htm>.

Cracking the code

Cracking the code is a series of 11 online fact sheets to help job candidates understand and navigate APS application and recruitment processes. The fact sheets address the myths and misconceptions that often affect the image of the APS as an employer of choice. About 400 copies of the publication have been distributed and the guide is available on the Commission's website as well as through the *APSjobs* site. See <www.apsc.gov.au/publications07/crackingthecode.htm>.

Careers fairs and expos

The Commission attends careers fairs and expos to promote the APS as an employer of choice and to promulgate newly produced resources such as *Cracking the code* and the *APSjobs* website. Fairs and expos the Commission has attended this year include:

- A Centrelink Career expo in Nowra in November. The Commission's stall promoted the *APSjobs* website and other Commission resources. Over 400 people attended.
- The CeBit expo, in conjunction with the ACT Government, the Australian Government Information Management Office and other APS agencies in Sydney in May. The Commission provided marketing materials and staff to promote ICT careers in the APS. Commission staff spoke directly to about 300 delegates.
- The DEEWR Career expo in Canberra in June, where about 750 DEEWR staff were exposed to Commission products and services.

Improving people management

To help the APS improve its people management skills the Commission has developed two booklets and a training programme.

Succession management

Succession planning is a critical issue for the APS, with over 40% of the current workforce eligible for retirement in the next 10 years. This potential loss of employees with considerable corporate knowledge continues to be a challenge for agencies in terms of succession planning and knowledge management.

The Commission has continued to help agencies address succession management

within their organisations. Secretaries have considered a strategic paper from the Commission on succession management. The Commission has developed a booklet, *Ensuring leadership continuity in the Australian Public Service: a guide to succession management*, that includes practical tools for agencies to use in their succession planning processes. This will be launched in early 2008–09 and supported by professional development workshops to be delivered throughout the year.

Employee life cycle

During the year the Commission produced the guide, *Leading productive people: a manager's seven steps to success*, to consolidate its earlier work emphasising managers' core responsibilities in attracting, building and sustaining the workforce.

The guide identifies the essential steps new managers can take that make the biggest difference to leading productive people. The guide will serve as a gateway for managers and is designed to sit on APS agencies' websites with links to further information and resources on people management available in the APS.

The Commission also developed a training programme to support the guide, the first of which was delivered in June 2008.

Supporting networks and forums

The Commission has continued its active involvement in many APS networks and forums this year.

SES Human Resource Roundtable and Human Resource Directors Forum

The SES Human Resource Roundtable and Directors Forum continue to provide an opportunity for human resource leaders across the APS to exchange ideas and information.

The SES Human Resource Roundtable met five times and discussed topics including recruitment processes, workplace bullying, Indigenous issues, machinery of government changes, workforce planning, the new lobbyist code and workplace relations.

The Human Resource Directors Forum was held four times this year and continues to receive strong support and positive feedback from the APS human resource community, with attendance increasing significantly.

Corporate Management Forum

This forum (formerly the Commonwealth Managers Network, COMNET) provides networking opportunities for APS heads of corporate areas, encouraging two-way flow of ideas and discussion of significant issues. A new structure has proved effective and the forum is well attended.

Regional networks

Networks are important in keeping APS and other government employees connected, and regional offices have an important facilitation role. In each State and Territory, there is a strong and active network of senior leaders of Australian Government departments and agencies. These networks provide a valuable opportunity for collaboration, professional development and mutual support through a range of activities. The Commission has been working directly with network chairs to develop greater uniformity in the way in which the networks are named, managed, branded and supported. The Commission is keen to raise the networks' profiles and make them easily identifiable to senior APS staff across the nation.

The Commission also supports people management networks in most regions. Network events this year included briefings by:

- the Merit Protection Commissioner, examining better people management initiatives in the APS
- Dr Peter Cotton, Organisational and Clinical Psychologist, and *beyondblue* (the national depression initiative), on health at work
- Richard Harding from the Australian Government Solicitor, on workplace relations
- a number of agencies promoting their own initiatives and providing case studies.

The Western Australian regional office continued to sponsor the WA Public Sector Fellowship Programme that facilitates applied research in public policy and public management leading to a better understanding of contemporary issues for public sector organisations. The programme provides an APS employee the opportunity to undertake a full-time research placement at the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy.

Human resource capability development programme

The Commission continued to build the capability of HR practitioners in the APS through the *Human resource capability development programme*. This year three programmes were completed and three new programmes commenced. The programme is regularly updated to ensure the most relevant issues and ideas are incorporated.

Getting connected

The *Getting connected* seminar series presented by senior public servants with extensive whole-of-government experience continued. Two sessions were held during the year, namely:

- *Connected to whom: reality or talk*—an exploration of how technology can be

better used to connect citizens to government services.

- *Rebuilding the Federation*—looking at how the Council of Australian Governments is working and the impact of new arrangements on the Federation and on Commonwealth and State officials.

Encouraging workplace diversity

The Commission remains strenuous in its endeavours to encourage workplace diversity in the APS.

Employing people with disability

The Commission continued to promote employment of people with disability.

In 2006–07 it published *Ability at work: tapping the talent of people with disability* that provided advice to APS agencies on strategies they could use to increase their employment of people with disability. This year the Commission reached out to the employment sector through its publication *Ability at work: working better together*. The publication is designed to be a brief, plain English guide giving employment providers information to help them find employment in the APS for their clients with disability. The document outlines a number of topics, such as what makes the APS a good place to work, how recruitment processes work and options for seeking employment in the APS.

The Commission is grateful to those people in the disability support sector and their peak bodies and APS agencies that helped design this publication.

The Commission has had limited results in terms of improving employment outcomes in this area, which remains a significant challenge for agencies.

Productivity Commission inquiry into paid maternity, paternity and parental leave

In March the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Social Inclusion, the Hon. Julia Gillard, MP; and the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon. Jenny Macklin, MP, announced a Productivity Commission inquiry into paid maternity, paternity and parental leave.

The Commissioner made a submission to the inquiry outlining the effect of the extensive APS experience in providing paid maternity leave and flexible working arrangements. The submission highlighted that the combination of paid maternity leave and flexible working arrangements contributed to retaining women in the APS. The submission noted that:

- the retention rate of women in the APS who had taken maternity leave was approximately the same as their counterparts who had not taken maternity leave
- the large majority of women returning to work after maternity leave returned on 35 hours a week or less
- the majority of employees accessing flexible working arrangements were satisfied with these arrangements.

One area of concern the submission identified was the impact of taking maternity leave on the relative rate of promotion, with women who return from maternity leave apparently less likely to be promoted than their colleagues in following years.

The causes of this disparity have not been examined but may be affected by a number of factors, including personal choices made by employees about balancing new family commitments with the increased demands of

more senior positions, and greater access to part-time work at more senior levels. The figures may also be distorted by the fact that women having children tend to be at relatively more senior classifications already and simply have less scope for promotion.

The Commission will consider doing further research to identify the causes of this apparent disparity as part of its future work programme.

International Women’s Day

The Commission continued its tradition of running highly successful and popular events celebrating International Women’s Day in a number of states. Speakers this year included successful business director and inventor, Linda Lowndes, in Brisbane; comedian and journalist, Julie McCrossin, in Perth; and Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, in both Melbourne and Sydney.

The Commission’s Regional Director South Australia, Jo Saies, was guest speaker at an International Women’s Day event hosted by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs in Adelaide.



Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, Melbourne, March 2008

OUTPUT 3.3 STATISTICAL/ INFORMATION SERVICES

The Commission collects and analyses workforce statistics to support a high-performing APS. This data collection and analysis helps identify significant workforce challenges for the APS, and assists agencies to plan their workforce and benchmark their performance against that of the whole APS.

Achievements that contributed to this output included preparation and dissemination of the annual APS Statistical Bulletin, improvements to the data quality of APSED as well as the internet interface.

TABLE 18: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 3.3 STATISTICAL/INFORMATION SERVICES

| Target | Result |
|---|--|
| Quantity | |
| 1. Maintain and analyse data on APS employment for research within the Commission and by other organisations. | |
| • APS Employment Database | Achieved. APSED was used for APS-wide workforce analysis and reporting, including for the State of the Service report and briefing on workforce issues for Portfolio Secretaries. |
| • Internet accessible data reporting tool | Achieved. The APSED Internet Interface is fully functional, with enhancements made during the year. |
| • Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin—target 1 per year | Achieved. The APS Statistical Bulletin was published in hard copy and electronically. |
| Quality | |
| 1. Comprehensive and reliable data in a useful format. | Achieved. Improved data quality was achieved through ongoing liaison with agencies and by enhancements to APSED. |
| Estimated price: \$1.368 million | Actual price: \$1.422 million |

Throughout the year APSED was used to support research on APS issues including for the State of the Service Report.

Maintaining APS Employment Database and undertaking related research

The Commission maintains the APS Employment Database (APSED), the central database source on APS employment and a major source of information on APS workforce trends. It is an important tool for ensuring cross-service accountability, particularly for the State of the Service Report. APSED is used extensively as the sampling frame for many surveys including the State of the Service Employee Survey.

It is an important resource for research, including for MAC projects and, this year, analysis of the Executive Level 1 cohort as well as in preparing the Commission's submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into paid maternity, paternity and parental leave. In addition, APSED time series data is used regularly to respond to requests about trends in APS employment, including for particular classification levels, such as for the SES.

Agencies' provision of data continues to improve, with almost all providing data regularly through automated processes. The Commission liaises closely with agencies to ensure APSED requirements are incorporated into system updates and to secure the integrity of the data they submit. It is important that agencies allocate sufficient resources to ensure data meets APSED specifications—providing accurate data means fewer resources are needed to answer queries.

The Commission undertook a scoping project to improve the quality of employee-provided data. Employees were contacted

directly to address any inconsistency in data items provided by agencies. The project was successful, and demonstrated employees' willingness to provide such data if agencies establish mechanisms and processes for its collection.

This year the Commission worked closely with several agencies moving into coverage by the *Public Service Act 1999*. Another major project involved updating APSED details of employees affected by the changes to Administrative Arrangements Orders announced in December.

In the 2007–08 Budget, the Commission received additional funding to redevelop APSED. This project is designed to improve data management for all employees as well as allow analysis of data for core SES employees. The upgrade is largely complete and will facilitate future enhancements to the database.

APS Employment Database Internet Interface

Agencies and other users can access aggregated data directly through the APSED Internet Interface (APSEDII) at <www.apsedii.gov.au>. The interface enables users to produce data similar to that published in the APS Statistical Bulletin in order to support better practice workforce planning and benchmarking. APSEDII produces charts and tables that users can download for further manipulation. Some 75 users in 31 agencies have gained access to more detailed information on APSEDII through a secure logon and password procedure. This level of access allows designated users to examine unit record information for employees in their agency to aid workforce planning and improve data quality.

This year, APSEDII was enhanced to improve compatibility with a range of

Internet browsers and the functionality of the secure site.

APS Statistical Bulletin

The *APS Statistical Bulletin 2006–07* contained a snapshot of APS-wide staffing as at June 2007, and of staff movements during 2006–07. The bulletin also provided summary data for the past 15 years and its format largely followed that of previous years, with the addition of further tables relating to equal employment opportunity (EEO).

The bulletin contains information useful to agencies in benchmarking themselves against APS-wide trends. It is distributed to all APS agency heads, State and Territory public service commissioners, New Zealand's State Services Commissioner, and leading public and tertiary education libraries. It is available in hard copy and electronically on the Commission's website.

OUTPUT 3.4 RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The Commission's research and evaluation activities are designed to help the APS and the Government achieve optimal governance outcomes. It pursues research and evaluation activities through:

- statistical assessment of APS performance
- comprehensive annual surveys of APS operations and employee attitudes
- public administration research, both Australian and international
- production of speeches and presentations for the Commission's Executive.

These activities equip the Commission to assess the capacity of the APS and its employees to meet Government objectives, address future challenges and develop guidance and recommendations for change. The research and evaluation work also

enables the Commission to learn from and benchmark APS performance against that of comparable overseas public sector jurisdictions.

A significant achievement that contributed to this output was the launch of a new research series, the *Contemporary Government Challenges* publications, which explore key issues of relevance to APS leaders and managers and are intended to stimulate wider public debate about future challenges facing the APS.

Research and advise on public administration

The Commission undertakes research into public administration developments within the Australian Government, and in Australia's jurisdictions and overseas to assist agencies improve their performance. This research is also used to support the Commission's publications, speeches, presentations and learning and development programmes.

Evaluating and reporting on APS performance

APS performance is evaluated through the Commissioner's State of the Service Report to Parliament and through specific issues-based research and evaluation projects.

Under section 44(2) of the *Public Service Act 1999*, the Commissioner is required to report annually on the state of the APS. Although the Act does not specify the issues to be covered in the report, the Commissioner's approach has been to focus on contemporary issues confronting the APS while maintaining her evaluation of the extent to which agencies incorporate and uphold the APS Values (section 41(1)(a)). The Commissioner is required to table the report in Parliament by 30 November each year.

TABLE 19: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION—OUTPUT 3.4 RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

| Target | Result |
|--|--|
| Quantity | |
| 1. Undertake research into and advise on public administration. | Achieved. A range of papers, speeches and presentations encompassing contemporary public administration issues were produced and research undertaken on public administration challenges facing other jurisdictions for the State of the Service Report and the Executive. Research for four papers on contemporary governance challenges was also completed. |
| 2. Evaluate and provide information on the performance of the APS through an annual State of the Service Report. | Achieved. Produced the <i>State of the Service Report 2006–07</i> , <i>State of the Service employee survey results 2006–07</i> and the <i>State of the Service 2006–07: at a glance</i> publications. |
| 3. Provide large agencies with agency-specific survey reports aimed at helping agencies assess their performance compared to the APS overall. | Achieved. Produced 45 agency-specific employee survey reports. |
| 4. At least one new evaluation aimed at improving the performance of APS departments and agencies. | Achieved. A new series of publications, <i>Contemporary Government Challenges</i> , that aims to improve the performance of APS agencies, was launched. Four publications, based on the findings of research and evaluations, were released: <i>Agency health: monitoring agency health and improving performance</i> ; <i>Building better governance: Tackling wicked problems: a public policy perspective</i> ; and <i>Changing behaviour: a public policy perspective</i> . |
| 5. Secretariat and research support services provided to the MAC, and MAC Deputy Secretaries' Groups responsible for overseeing particular MAC projects; and operational support to the Commissioner as the Executive Officer of the MAC—estimates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 MAC meetings• 8 Deputy Secretaries' Group meetings• 2 projects to be supported. | Overestimated. The Commission provided support for one MAC meeting in 2007–08. Overestimated. The Commission provided support for five Deputy Secretaries' Group meetings for the citizen-centred service delivery project. Achieved. The eighth MAC report, <i>Note for file: a report on recordkeeping in the Australian Public Service</i> was launched in August 2007. Work continued on the citizen-centred service delivery project commissioned in May 2007. |
| Quality | |
| 1. High level of client use of research outputs. | Achieved. Papers, speeches and presentations prepared, including four <i>Contemporary Government Challenges</i> publications, met all relevant requirements. |
| 2. High level of client use of the State of the Service Report. | Achieved. Received positive feedback on the usefulness of the 2007 State of the Service publications from a wide range of APS staff. The evaluation questionnaire revealed that 90% of respondents believed the report a useful resource. More than 600 APS staff nation-wide attended presentations promoting the report by the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Evaluation Group staff. More than 1000 delegates nation-wide attended presentations by Evaluation Group staff as part of the Comcare National Customer Seminar Series on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agency health—the first in the <i>Contemporary Government Challenges</i> series• <i>State of the Service Report 2006–07</i>. |

| | |
|--|--|
| 3. 100% compliance with tabling requirements. | Achieved. The State of the Service reports complied with Government tabling requirements. All reports were produced to high standards of accuracy and drew on the latest available research material from international and Australian jurisdictions. |
| 4. High level of satisfaction that individual agency reports are useful to agencies. | Achieved. Human resource management employees who were drawing on their agency-specific reports to brief senior managers on a range of issues contacted Commission staff to provide positive feedback. |
| 5. High level of satisfaction of agencies directly involved in the evaluation and a high level of satisfaction that the evaluations are useful to agencies | Achieved. Survey data on the outcomes of the <i>Contemporary Government Challenges</i> papers has been positive. <i>Tackling wicked problems</i> and <i>Changing behaviour</i> have been included in reference material for a number of tertiary public administration courses, including those of ANZSOG. In response to questionnaires, the two agencies involved in the evaluation case studies of the National Landcare Programme and the National Tobacco Strategy (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Department Health and Ageing) said Commission staff had conducted their respective case studies professionally and that they were a valuable resource for stakeholders. |
| 6. A high level of satisfaction of the MAC and its Deputy Secretaries' Groups with the relevance, quality and timeliness of advice and support provided. | Achieved. MAC and its Deputy Secretaries' Groups have indicated broad support for the Commission's Secretariat work to underpin MAC projects. |
| Estimated price: \$1.528 million | Actual price: \$1.522 million |

The *State of the Service Report 2006–07* covered perennial issues such as merit, workplace diversity, upholding the APS Values and Code of Conduct, leadership and job satisfaction. It featured an in-depth analysis of attracting, recruiting and retaining staff in the APS, including why people choose to join the APS. The report also focused on areas where agencies can improve their efficiency and/or effectiveness. The report highlighted five key challenges facing the APS as a whole, namely, agency health and culture, new ways of doing business, modernising APS employment, interactions with Government, and leadership.

The Commission drew upon diverse and complementary data sources to develop the report. These sources included the Commission's own research and databases (particularly APSED), published and unpublished material from other agencies, Australian National Audit Office reports

and, where available, comparable data from other Australian and international jurisdictions.

The Commission also conducted two surveys that contributed to the report:

- The agency survey provided information on a wide range of management and capability issues in agencies with 20 or more APS employees. For the fifth consecutive year the Commission conducted the agency survey online and this year achieved a 100% response rate from the 88 agencies in scope.
- The second survey, sent to about 9000 randomly selected APS employees, provided data on employee attitudes to, and understanding of, a variety of issues including the APS Values, Code of Conduct, merit, work–life balance, job satisfaction, whole-of-government, working with external stakeholders, diversity, individual performance

management and harassment and bullying. The 2007 employee survey had a high response rate, for a voluntary survey, of 64%—an outcome identical to the 2006 result.

Following the success of agency-specific employee survey reports in previous years, the Commission expanded the coverage of these reports to all agencies which it has provided to agency heads with at least 400 employees and all departments. These reports summarise the agency's own employee responses and compare their results with the APS-wide results. Statistically valid differences are marked appropriately. Small and medium-sized agencies are provided with a benchmark summary of all similarly sized agencies, respectively.

The Commission also produced two associated publications: the *State of the Service employee survey results 2006–07*, which provided the results of the employee survey in a collated, aggregate form; and the *State of the Service 2006–07: at a glance* pamphlet, which contained a succinct summary of findings.

Copies of reports were distributed to APS agency heads, members of the Corporate Management Forum, all SES staff and agency contact officers for the two surveys. Copies were also made available to State and Territory public service commissioners, New Zealand's State Services Commissioner, selected non-APS agency heads, relevant academics and overseas contacts and all those employees attending Commission briefings on the report. All three publications are available on the Commission's website. See <www.apsc.gov.au>.

The Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Evaluation Group staff delivered over 20 presentations nation-wide, which were

attended by more than 600 APS staff. These included a keynote address by the Commissioner in each Australian capital city.

To evaluate readers' perceptions of the report, a short questionnaire was included with each copy of the 2007 report. The questionnaire asked readers for general impressions of the report, the usefulness of the chapters and the value of the *At a glance* pamphlet. The feedback—from 361 respondents—was generally positive. Nine out of 10 agreed that the report is a valuable resource, that the information presented is easy to understand and that the inclusion of time series data is useful.

To maintain the relevance of the State of the Service Report within an ever-changing and challenging environment, planning the focus and direction of the next report began in January 2008. One of the key considerations in the development of the 2008 report has been identifying issues that will enable the report to drive improvement across the APS.

Particular focus was given, in the employee survey, to employee engagement, individual productivity, interactions with ministers and the Parliament, employees' ideas for improving citizen access to government services, and their views about what the APS can do to meet the challenges facing Australia—today and in the future. The 2008 employee survey, which was in the field for two months, achieved a response rate of 65%—the highest ever recorded for the survey. Consistent with the approach taken in 2007, in December 2008 agencies with at least 400 employees will be provided with a copy of their results, benchmarked against the results for the APS as a whole.

The agency survey also included a focus on the issues, but from an employer perspective. It examined areas such as the impact of the

additional efficiency dividend on agencies and their staff, agencies' leave management practices, succession management strategies and the actions the APS could take to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of ICT in the APS. It was sent online to agencies in early June for completion and return by mid July 2008.

Undertake specific-issue evaluations

In 2007–08, the Commission focused its specific-issue evaluation and research activity on cutting-edge subjects relevant to senior APS managers.

In October the Commission launched four publications in its *Contemporary Government Challenges* series, providing information and advice to help APS agencies improve their performance.

The publications launched were:

- *Agency health: monitoring agency health and improving performance* identifies ways to help agencies monitor their corporate health.
- *Building better governance* provides case studies to show how some APS agencies have tackled improved governance
- *Tackling wicked problems: a public policy perspective* aims to stimulate debate around tackling seemingly intractable problems
- *Changing behaviour: a public policy perspective* explores how democratic governments can influence citizens' behaviour

The launch was followed by a series of seminars designed to make the publications more accessible to agencies, and more seminars are planned.

The publications offer a mix of practical solutions, case studies, and issues to be further considered and debated.

Upcoming publications will tackle the accountability framework, and approaches to reducing regulation.

Agency health: monitoring agency health and improving performance

This publication focuses on helping agencies monitor their corporate health. 'Corporate health' refers to the broad spectrum of agency governance issues, such as organisational direction and capability, leadership, corporate governance processes, relationships and integrity, and agency culture. High levels of corporate health are linked directly to high rates of overall performance, which allow agencies to realise their goals, fulfill their mission and deliver the outcomes their Government requires. Conversely, poor corporate health can lay the foundations for poor performance or organisational failure. By paying close attention to indicators of corporate health, agencies can identify and address early warning signs of poor performance before they begin to adversely affect outcome achievement.

Agency health takes a practical approach. It includes a two-part health checklist for agencies' use. The first checklist comprises corporate health indicators for agencies that perform well, and the second sets out corporate health indicators associated with agencies at risk of poor performance. Case studies are used to illustrate key points. The Commission's Evaluation Group staff were requested by Comcare to assist in a range of seminars on agency health, which drew on this publication.

Building better governance

This publication was developed as a result of a series of discussions held in 2006 with APS departmental executives, who wanted to hear case studies that illustrate what agencies are doing to improve their practices and

approaches to governance. The resulting publication contains 13 case studies developed in conjunction with APS agencies.

A number of common themes emerged from the case studies, and these became the seven ‘building blocks’ to better governance outlined in the document. One of these building blocks is the need to have in place appropriate governance committee structures—a number of the case studies are centred on ensuring this happens. The other building blocks to better governance are:

- strong leadership, culture and communication
- clear accountability mechanisms
- working effectively across organisational boundaries
- comprehensive risk management, compliance and assurance systems
- strategic planning, performance monitoring and evaluation
- flexible and evolving principles-based systems.

Tackling wicked problems: a public policy perspective

This publication recognises that the APS is increasingly being asked to deal with highly complex and intractable policy problems. Some of these problems are so complex that they have been called wicked problems—the term ‘wicked’ being used in the sense of describing tough issues, highly resistant to resolution. High-profile examples include climate change, ongoing Indigenous disadvantage and land degradation.

This publication is designed to stimulate debate about what is needed to successfully tackle wicked problems. It makes the point that it is important, as a first step, for wicked problems to be recognised as such. Wicked problems usually do not have clear solutions,

and such solutions are also often not verifiably right or wrong, but rather rely on a relative assessment such as better or worse or good enough.

Tackling wicked problems emphasises that wicked problems rarely sit conveniently within the responsibility of any single organisation or jurisdiction. Instead, they reinforce the vital importance of being able to work in a whole-of-government way, and require the engagement and cooperation of a range of stakeholders.

The paper discusses a range of approaches that can help deal with these issues. Successfully solving or at least managing wicked problems requires reassessment of some of the traditional public service ways of working and solving problems. These problems challenge the APS governance and accountability structures, skills base and organisational capacity.

Changing behaviour: a public policy perspective

This publication deals with the challenge of how democratic governments can most effectively influence their citizens’ behaviour. *Changing behaviour* presents numerous examples and outlines the main theories and empirical evidence in relation to behavioural change. It also aims to help agencies develop and implement more effective policies. Two detailed case studies were finalised in 2007–08.

One case study examined the National Landcare Programme administered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. One of the key goals of this programme is to influence landholders’ behaviour by enabling them to identify, develop and implement improved natural resource management practices at the farm level.

The other examined the National Tobacco Strategy administered by the Department of Health and Ageing. This strategy aims to prevent uptake of smoking, encourage and assist smokers to quit, eliminate harmful exposure to tobacco smoke among non-smokers and, where feasible, reduce the harm associated with continuing use of, and dependence on, tobacco and nicotine.

Although the case studies were not published, they were provided to the relevant agencies and used to inform *Contemporary Government Challenges* publications as well as the Commission's training programmes and the State of the Service Report.

Undertaking other research projects

The Commission commenced three more projects, the results of which are expected to be published in the first half of 2008–09 in the *Contemporary Government Challenges* series. One examines the broad accountability framework and its congruence with contemporary modes of public service; one looks at devolved government arrangements; the other focuses on smarter ways of developing regulatory systems in order to achieve better policy outcomes.

Management Advisory Committee

The Commission continued to provide research and secretariat services to MAC. The committee was established under section 64 of the *Public Service Act 1999* to advise the Government on matters relating to the management of the APS. MAC is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, with the Commissioner as executive officer. MAC last met in October 2007. The Committee chair decided to consider how MAC can best function in the future and, in early 2008–09 a proposed new committee charter was

developed with a new Executive Sub Committee to recommend, conduct and advise on the forthcoming MAC agenda.

MAC currently has 24 members, including all Portfolio Secretaries, the Commissioner and the heads of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Customs Service, the Australian Taxation Office and Centrelink. The Auditor-General is invited to attend MAC meetings as an observer. The proposed new Executive Sub Committee will have a core membership of six and will comprise the secretaries of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Finance and Deregulation, the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, the Commissioner and the Commissioner of Taxation.

During 2007–08, MAC focused its efforts on:

- preparing the eighth MAC report, *Note for file: a report on recordkeeping in the Australian Public Service*
- overseeing a project on citizen-centred service delivery.

Recordkeeping in the APS

The MAC project on recordkeeping commenced in August 2006 in order to articulate the purpose of, and the business case for, recordkeeping; identify any impediments to recordkeeping approaches in the APS context; and explain how recordkeeping requirements are affected by information collection, use and disclosure obligations. It also examined how agencies can best achieve efficient and effective recordkeeping in today's world (including in relation to electronic communication). The report, *Note for file: a report on recordkeeping in the Australian Public Service* was released in August 2007 and has been circulated widely.

It has formed the basis of the new approach to dealing with agencies by the National Archives of Australia. Recordkeeping requirements have become more streamlined and less prescriptive for agencies. *Check-up*, the Archives' interactive self-assessment tool, was also launched to assess the state of records management in agencies.

Citizen-centred service delivery

In May 2007, MAC commissioned a project on citizen-centred service delivery in order to:

- examine and map government service provision around three major life events—the birth of a child, the transition from school, and supporting the care needs of elderly Australians
- advise on possible improvements.

MAC considered an interim report in October. Finalisation of the project is pending, having regard to wider developments in the service delivery area.

Public Service Commissioners' Conference

The Public Service Commissioners' Conference (PSCC) is a cross-jurisdictional forum for Commonwealth, State and Territory Public Service commissioners and New Zealand's State Services Commissioner. The Commission provides secretariat and research support to the conference. The PSCC identifies and discusses policy, service delivery and other matters of common interest and strategic significance that are central to improving public administration. The location and chair of meetings rotate through each jurisdiction.

The PSCC provides opportunities for Commissioners to frame the agenda for consideration of public sector reform issues and future public administration directions. It also serves as a vehicle for exchanging

information and experience and advancing Commissioners' discussion of issues by:

- determining the nature and extent of data and information collection
- comparing and analysing performance and best practice across public sector jurisdictions
- setting priorities and formulating an ongoing work programme
- suggesting possible cross-jurisdictional projects and establishing senior officer working groups to advise and make recommendations to commissioners
- evaluating research and evaluation outcomes
- assessing the feasibility of joint service delivery approaches.

These joint activities enhance Commissioner interaction and strengthen the individual Commissioner's ability to shape development and implementation of public sector employment policies and practices within their jurisdictions.

The PSCC, which first met in 2000, has met twice a year since 2003. It met in October 2007 in Sydney and in March 2008 in Brisbane. The main issues discussed were governance and accountability; workforce planning, including recruitment and retention strategies; citizen-centred service delivery; trust in government; and public sector reform.