

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

There were no specific significant developments in any internal or external scrutinies of the Registry.

FRAUD CONTROL

The Audit Committee met during the year to discuss the preparation and acceptance of the Registry's Financial Statements, finalisation of Chief Executive Instructions under the FMA Act, approval of the Fraud Control Plan, acquisition of a new financial management information system and responses to questions emanating from Auditor-General Reports and Parliament.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Auditor-General Audit Reports having an implication for the Registry, as well as many other APS agencies were:

- Report No. 20 of 1998-99 which dealt with *"Audits of the Financial Statements of Commonwealth Entities for the period ended 30 June 1998"*;
- Report No. 21 of 1998-99 which dealt with *"Costing of Services"*;
- Report No. 33 of 1998-99 which dealt with *"Audit Activity Report: July to December 1998, Summary of Outcomes"*; and
- Report No. 38 of 1998-99 which dealt with *"Management of Commonwealth Budgetary Process"*.

CONSULTANTS

The Registry's policy on the selection and engagement of consultants is to receive value for money on the basis of competitive quotations.

When it is recognised that a requirement cannot be met utilising the internal resources of the Registry, the decision is made to engage the services of a consultant. The task to be undertaken is thoroughly defined and the specifications documented. Where possible three companies are drawn from a register of consultants based on specialist advice and are invited to quote.

A range of consultancies were entered into in 1998-99. The number of consultants engaged was nine, the total cost was \$325,840. Appendix 10 sets out the name, amount and purpose for each consultancy.

The main category of purpose for which consultants were engaged during the reporting period was in the area of information technology.

SERVICE CHARTER

The draft Registry Service Charter has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and customers, Commission Members and Registry staff. Customers, Members, staff and the Registry Consultative Committee and Community and Public Sector Union were all consulted in drafting the Service Charter. A committee of senior Commission Members considered the feedback received regarding the draft versions of the Charter document.

It is anticipated that the Registry Service Charter will be completed in September 1999 and issued via a media release, mail outs, hand outs at proceedings, notices in the weekly AIR Bulletin and on the AIRC web site.

The draft Service Charter includes performance standards covering quality of relationships, service delivery and complies with the Government's *Charter of Public Service for a Culturally Diverse Society*. Systems for measuring performance against these standards will be incorporated into team and individual plans.

In addition, the draft Charter provides a system for the collection and recording of customer feedback (compliments and suggestions) and complaints. Feedback received will be addressed as part of team reporting cycles and included in the Annual Report.

Once implemented, it is intended that the Charter will be reviewed on a continual basis.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



Victoria Service Team staff attending a client inquiry.

The two main elements to the Registry's staff training and development (ST&D) efforts during 1998-99 continued to be a focus on the introduction and improved usage of office technology, and client service. The two elements are interrelated as improvements to office technology, and its use, are a key to improvements in delivering efficiency and improving service to the Commission, and to the Commission and Registry's clients.

A major training effort was directed at improving the effective use of Word 97 by Associates, and other

staff involved in the production and publishing of Commission documents. Further training was provided in the use of a new Word 97 template developed to assist with the reformatting of simplified awards, and to assist with the publishing of Commission documents in electronic databases, and on the Commission's web page.

Building on training in previous years the client service training focus during 1998-99 was on personal security awareness. The primary aim of this training was to build upon the client handling skills of staff in dealing with clients who may be experiencing stress, or dangerous situations.

A national training calendar was prepared for 1998-99, the major targets of which were:

- introductory training for staff assisting the Commission with the simplification of awards process;
- ongoing Associate training;
- Associate relief training;
- personal security awareness;
- upgrading Word 97 skills;
- use of legal research databases;
- operation of Commission's pilot videoconference sites;
- operation of new voicemail systems in Melbourne and Sydney offices;
- introduction of accrual budgeting and new finance system; and
- workplace relations framework.

In addition to the training anticipated in the national training calendar, other training priorities were addressed at either a national or local level as they emerged over the course of the year.

Outcomes in 1998-99

A total of \$147,041 was spent on staff training in 1998-99, comprising both general staff training and development and information technology training.

This involved a total of:

- 560 person days, 414 on general ST&D and 146 on information technology; and
- 783 staff attendances, 566 at general ST&D and 217 staff attendances at information technology training modules.

In relation to information technology training, the majority of this training was in upgrading the skills of staff in using Microsoft Office 97 applications, particularly Word, electronic research tools, and developing and upgrading the skills of the Registry's information technology officers.

The following courses were conducted in-house by external presenters:

- Team Development and Client Service;
- Word 97 Upgrade for Commission Documents;
- Advanced Applications of Word 97;

- Finance Systems; and
- SubsPlus.

Some of the training delivered by Registry staff included the following courses/programs:

- Associates' Ongoing Training Program Forum attended by 60 Associates, and Service Team staff;
- Associates' Initial Training Program conducted in Melbourne and Sydney, for a total of eleven new Associates at the Australian Public Service Level 4/5;
- Associate Relief Skills for staff in Sydney;
- Induction and Orientation for new staff;
- Award Simplification;
- Collecting Public Monies; and
- using videoconferencing equipment for staff in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY (PARTICIPATIVE WORK PRACTICES)

Registry participative work practices are impacted by the following primary considerations:

- the Government's freedom of association policy;
- the *Australian Industrial Registry Productivity Agreement 1998* (the Registry Agreement), specifically clause 12 regarding the Registry's consultative arrangements; and
- section 22C of the *Public Service Act 1922*.

In particular subclause 12.3 of the Registry Agreement provides that:

“... workplace issues will be discussed in a spirit of co-operation and trust, which will ensure that employees not only receive information on workplace issues that affect them, but also have an opportunity to contribute their views on those issues. An employee or their representative may, at any time, raise issues directly with their supervisor/manager”.

In the latter part of 1998-99 the Registry took some steps towards reconsidering its communications arrangements, including the formal consultative mechanisms.

The first considerations have been in relation to the Registry Consultative Committee (RCC) which is the Registry's primary formal consultative body:

- the RCC was subsequently reconstituted to provide for staff representatives in addition to the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) representation; and
- a review of the *Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Operations of the RCC* (MOU) was commenced.

At the RCC meeting of 21 May 1999 the new Industrial Registrar advised that it is his intention to communicate with staff in a variety of forums, both formal and informal, as matters arise. Additionally, he advised the RCC is one such avenue and an important one, but it was important the MOU not cut across or constrain a strategy for comprehensive and continuous consultation with staff.

Currently other consultation occurs through meetings at both branch and section level which provide the opportunity for all employees to be consulted and to participate in decision making.

In addition to the RCC and the branch and section meetings, there is a Registry Occupational Health and Safety Committee (details regarding the operation of this Committee are reported at pages 90-91).

A comprehensive consultative process will commence in 1999-2000 with regard to the operations of the Registry, the structures in place to support those operations and the relationships both within the Registry and with the Commission/Registry clients. These will be outlined at a Managers' Conference in July and subsequently with focus group meetings with staff.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY PLAN STATUS

The Registry's current Industrial Democracy Plan (ID Plan) under s.22C of the *Public Service Act 1922* is for the period 1995-98. It is presently being re-evaluated and a new Plan is being considered consistent with:

- the requirements of s.22C of the *Public Service Act 1922*;
- the Government's freedom of association policy; and
- the intentions outlined in the Registry Agreement.

CONSULTATIVE MECHANISMS

The objective of the current Industrial Democracy Plan is:

"To bring about significant participation and involvement by Registry staff in the decision-making processes of the Registry".

This objective is achieved through the RCC and through meetings at both branch and section level which provide the opportunity for all employees to be consulted.

RESOURCES

Registry staff with designated responsibility for the implementation of industrial democracy principles and practices are senior management generally, but specifically the General Manager, Corporate Support Branch who is the senior executive responsible for industrial democracy.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Registry's occupational health and safety (OH&S) considerations are governed by:

- the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991* (the OH&S(CE) Act) and Regulations; and
- Registry OH&S policy and procedural documents, including the OH&S Agreement between the Registry and the CPSU.

Section 74 of the OH&S(CE) Act provides the basis for annual reporting requirements.

OH&S POLICY

The Registry's OH&S Policy aims to:

- comply with the OH&S(CE) Act and other relevant legislation as a minimum standard;
- provide for effective cooperation between the Registry and its staff in promoting and developing measures to ensure their health, safety and welfare at work; and
- provide adequate mechanisms for reviewing the effectiveness of measures taken.

OH&S Committees

There are two OH&S Committees in operation in the Registry:

- the Registry OH&S Committee (National Consultative Committee); and
- the NSW OH&S Committee (Local Committee).

The Registry OH&S Committee comprises three management and three CPSU/staff representatives. It has the following terms of reference:

- to advise, develop and implement OH&S policy and procedural guidelines and programs;
- to review and report on all OH&S matters, including annual report requirements;
- to liaise extensively on OH&S matters; and
- to examine reports and determine appropriate actions on matters contained therein from other Registry OH&S Committees and Designated Work Groups.

The Registry OH&S Committee met three times in 1998-99. Minutes of Committee meetings were provided to the RCC and published in the Registry's *Staff Information Bulletin*.

OH&S considerations during 1998-99

The Registry OH&S Committee 1998-99 Activity Plan contained three major areas of intended activity:

- a review of the Registry/CPSU OH&S Agreement;
- the implementation of recommendations contained in a Comcare Workplace Investigation Report of June 1998; and
- Registry OH&S policy and procedural considerations.

The outcomes of OH&S related activity were:

- a revised OH&S Agreement forwarded to RCC for endorsement;
- workplace inspections in the Melbourne and Sydney offices;
- a replacement program of workstations for identified employees;
- the issue of a working out-of-hours policy;
- an initial consideration of some health and fitness options for both Commission Members and staff;
- the identification of some security issues which are to be addressed later in 1999; and
- an influenza vaccination program.

The Registry also has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by ACCESS Programs.

1998-99 OH&S data

There were no instances of:

- dangerous occurrences for which the Registry provided a notice to Comcare pursuant to section 68 of the OH&S(CE) Act;

- investigations undertaken, tests conducted, directions given to the Registry under section 45 nor notices given to the employer under sections 30, 46 and 47 of the OH&S(CE) Act during the year; or
- Provisional Improvement Notices issued by a Health and Safety Representative under section 29 of the OH&S(CE) Act.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Under s.8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* statements are to be included in the annual reports of Commonwealth agencies.

ESTABLISHMENT

The Australian Industrial Registry is a statutory authority established under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*. The Registry carries out statutory and administrative duties pursuant to the Act.

ORGANISATION

The Registry comprises the Industrial Registrar, a number of Deputy Industrial Registrars and other staff.

FUNCTIONS

The Industrial Registrar, Deputy Industrial Registrars and Registry staff provide administrative support to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, and exercise statutory functions of a regulatory nature concerning the registration of employer and employee associations which may participate in the conciliation and arbitration system provided by the Act.

CATEGORIES OF DOCUMENTS

The Industrial Registrar and Deputy Industrial Registrars are exempt from the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* in respect of non-administrative matters. Documents of an administrative nature fall into the following categories:

Publications

Copies of awards, orders, decisions and agreements issued by the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and, since 1 March 1989, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission are available for purchase through offices of the Australian Industrial Registry either individually or by subscription from Award Sales, Australian Industrial Registry, GPO Box 1994S, Melbourne, Victoria 3001.

Commonwealth Arbitration Reports (CARs) (published volumes cover the periods 1904 to 1986 and 1991 to August 1993) can be inspected at offices of the Registry.

Returns

Financial returns of organisations and a list of office-bearers of registered organisations and their branches, can be made available at any office of the Registry. Photocopies will be made available on payment of a prescribed fee.

Files

Commission files (other than files relating to applications for relief in respect of termination of employment), Organisations' files and Board of Reference files can be made available at any office of the Registry unless determined otherwise by a Member of the Commission or the Industrial Registrar. Photocopies will be made available on payment of a prescribed fee.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROCEDURES AND INITIAL CONTACT POINTS

Many of the documents of the Registry which are prepared or held under provisions of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* can be inspected or purchased at any of the offices listed in Appendix 3. General inquiries may therefore be directed to any of these offices.

Requests for access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* should be made in writing and delivered or posted, together with the prescribed fee of \$30, to the Industrial Registrar, Principal Registry, Level 35, Nauru House, 80 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000 or Industrial Registrar, GPO Box 1994S, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, telephone (03) 9653 8200. Reading facilities will be made available at any Registry by arrangement.

The Registry also acts as the initial contact point for any inquiries relating to the Commission.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

There were two requests received during the reporting period.

PRIVACY

There were no reports served on the Registry by the Privacy Commissioner under s.30 of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

No determination was made against the Registry pursuant to s.52 of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

No determination was made against the Registry under s.72 of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

ADVERTISING AND MARKET RESEARCH

The Registry conducted no market research. During the reporting period the Registry spent \$120,835 on advertising. Included in this amount were payments to:

- TMP Worldwide (approximately \$65,000) and Advertising Investment Services (approximately \$16,000) predominantly for the statutory requirements arising from the Act in relation to registered organisations and common rules in the Territories; and
- AusInfo (approximately \$12,000) for Commonwealth Government Gazette requirements relating to recruitment and purchase actions.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND PAY

No performance payments were made for the reporting period.