

ANAO's Response and Actions in Relation to the Parliaments' Audit Priorities for 2005-06.

Committee	Proposal	ANAO response and action
<p>Joint Migration</p>	<p>Integration of the RRT and MRT administrative services.</p>	<p>The Auditor-General approved a performance audit of the Migration Review Tribunal (MRT) and Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) on 14 April 2005. An audit objective is to assess 'the achievement of efficiency improvements by sharing tribunal resources'.</p>
	<p>Effectiveness of the visitor bonds scheme.</p>	<p>The ANAO's Audit Work Programme for 2005-06 has a topic '<i>Visa Management: a series of compliance audits against visa classifications</i>'. This entry foreshadows a rolling programme of compliance audits against the various visa classifications. It will include the broad category of temporary entry visas (which sponsored family visitor visas are a part). The ANAO will consider the broadening of the scope of these audits to include the operation of the visitor visa bond scheme where appropriate.</p>
	<p>Management of the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS).</p>	<p>An audit of (the then) Migrant Settlement Services was undertaken by the ANAO in 1998-99 (Report No.29). It concluded that the administration of settlement programmes fell short of good practice in some areas. The ANAO made 12 recommendations in the areas of planning, risk management, performance management, procedures for grant applications and various aspects of training.</p> <p>DIMIA has also undertaken a review of settlement services and the report was provided to the Ministerial Council for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in June 2003. The review found that while the concept of integrated planning remained relevant to settlement services it had not yet realised its full potential because of a lack of shared understanding of its objectives, scope and priorities. The review recommended a more proactive, regionally based planning process supported by improved data analysis capacity and more open communication and consultative arrangements. The Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS) is the outcome of this review and is in its first year of operation.</p> <p>The ANAO will consider including an audit of the CSSS in a future audit programme after the CSSS has been in operation for a further period of time.</p>
	<p>Character-checking procedures for Australian citizen applications.</p>	<p>Although citizenship is governed by a separate Act, it shares the requirement to be of 'good character' with the <i>Migration Act</i>. DIMIA uses common procedures for character checks for the purposes of citizenship and migration. These are principally through the Movement Alert List (MAL) and police checks.</p> <p>The ANAO's Performance Audit Work Programme for 2005-06 has a reserve audit of the Administration of Health and/or Character Provisions of the Migration Act and a reserve topic to examine the MAL.</p>

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Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce Participation	Industrial Relations Commission.	<p>The ANAO will consider including an audit of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) and Australian Industrial Registry (AIR) as a performance audit topic in a future Audit Work Programme. Commencement of such an audit would be influenced by decisions made by the Government as to the role and functions of AIRC/AIR. If this audit was to be done the ANAO would focus on the administration of the AIRC/AIR to support the activities of the AIRC and meet the requirements of the <i>Workplace Relations Act 1996</i>. A particular focus could be on the mechanisms to measure, manage and report on the performance of the AIRC/AIR.</p>
	Experience of Disability Support Pension recipients (as part of an audit of Job Network Services).	<p>The ANAO notes that the Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce Participation's interest in the two performance audits of the Job Network currently underway. The performance audit of the job seeker experience of Job Network services assess whether DEWR's management of the Job Network ensures that job seekers are provided with high quality services. To reflect more accurately the focus of the audit, the report is expected to be entitled 'DEWR's oversight of Job Network services to job seekers.' Both this audit, and the one on the Design and Implementation of the Third Employment Services Contract are close to completion and are expected to be tabled in Parliament shortly. It is not feasible to change the scope of these audits at this late stage to specifically address the experience of Disability Support Pension (DSP) recipients.</p> <p>Consideration of future performance audits relating to the DSP would need to take into account the timing implications of the changes in administrative arrangements arising from the Administrative Arrangements Order of 27 October 2004 as well as potential legislative and policy changes that would affect DSP recipients.</p> <p>The ANAO will consider the DSP as a performance audit topic in the 2006-07 Audit Work Programme.</p>
House Family and Human Services Committee	The current administration of the Commonwealth /State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA), focussing on whether the Commonwealth is receiving value for money	<p>We currently have underway an audit of the CSDTA which is scheduled to table in July 2005.</p> <p>The audit is setting out to assess whether FaCS effectively undertakes its monitoring, coordination and oversight roles according to the CSTDA.</p> <p>The audit is focussing in particular on :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the application of whole-of-government approaches to providing disability services covered by the Agreement; • the adequacy of the performance monitoring and financial reporting framework and its application; and • the identification of mechanisms to improve the quality of disability services. <p>While our current audit will not directly answer the question posed by the Committee, it will provide insights in relation to</p>

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<p>Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories</p>	<p>There has never been a performance audit on the National Capital Authority (NCA) except as part of larger cross-portfolio audits. Suggested a performance audit on The administration, efficiency and cost effectiveness of the operation of the National Capital Authority.</p>	<p>the issue.</p> <p>It is proposed to undertake a focused performance audit of the NCA's development, management and maintenance of national assets. Assets administered by the Authority on behalf of the Commonwealth were valued at some \$349 million as of June 2004. These assets represent some of the National Capital's most nationally and culturally significant landscapes and attractions. They include Lake Burley Griffin, Anzac Parade and its memorials and large areas of landscape structure.</p>
<p>Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee</p>	<p>Agree as this as an audit priority for 2005-06 - APVMA – Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.</p>	<p>The Committee has requested an audit of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). The Auditor-General has also received a request from Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, to undertake an audit of the APVMA.</p> <p>An audit of the APVMA has therefore been included on the ANAO's programme. This audit is likely to commence early in 2005-06.</p>
	<p>Agreed on this audit as a priority for consideration - Biosecurity Australia, with particular reference to it new financial arrangements.</p>	<p>The ANAO is currently undertaking a follow-up audit of Managing for Quarantine Effectiveness, at the request of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA). The audit addresses the recommendations of a previous ANAO audit, and the recommendations of the JCPAA following its Inquiry into Australia's Quarantine Function.</p> <p>The current audit addresses recommendations of the previous audit and JCPAA regarding the Import Risk Assessment process, which is the responsibility of Biosecurity Australia.</p> <p>The ANAO considers that the best timing for the Committee's suggested audit of Biosecurity Australia would be following the conclusion of the current audit, and allowing time for the new arrangements for Biosecurity Australia to become established.</p> <p>An Audit has been included as a reserve topic for the 2005-06 audit programme. It will also be considered for inclusion in the ANAO's 2006-07 Programme, which would permit an audit of the new arrangements after they have become established.</p>
<p>Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee</p>	<p>AQIS has missed its deadline by four years for completing a review of the prohibited list of plants. As a result, over 3000 genera of plants known to be invasive weeds are still allowed for import into Australia. This audit should be given high priority.</p>	<p>A current audit is addressing the responsibilities of AQIS and Biosecurity Australia for quarantine and import risk assessments (Managing for Quarantine Effectiveness). These are areas that are pertinent to the concerns expressed by the committee about action on priorities. The audit report will be tabled in the spring 2005 session of the Parliament.</p> <p>Having regard to the current audit, and other audits being undertaken in the portfolio, the Committee's suggested audit topic has been included as a reserve in the ANAO's audit work Programme.</p>

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House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing	The Health Workforce.	<p>The Government has requested the Productivity Commission to undertake a research study of the health workforce. The study will be wide-ranging, and it arises from a decision of the Council of Australian Governments in June 2004. The Commission is seeking submissions by 31 July 2006, with a report due by 28 February 2006.</p> <p>The ANAO will review the Productivity Commissions report and consider for inclusion in the 2006-07 Audit Work Programme.</p>
	Rural Health.	<p>Rural health has been an important ANAO priority. The ANAO's most recent report on this matter was tabled in April 2004. This report was called, <i>The Department of Health and Ageing's Management of the Multipurpose Services Program and the Regional Health Services Program</i>, Audit Report No. 40, 2003-2004. Other ANAO reports relevant to rural health include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Planning of Aged Care, Department of Health and Ageing</i>, Report No. 19 of 1998-99; and • <i>Planning for Rural Health, Department of Health and Family Services</i>, Report No. 45 of 1997-98. <p>In addition, rural health has been an element in a number of other audits.</p> <p>Since the ANAO last reviewed rural health as a main topic, as recently as last financial year, it will next be considered for follow-up in 2006-2007.</p>
	Indigenous Health.	<p>Indigenous health is another audit ANAO priority. Performance audit reports have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program Follow-up Audit, Department of Health and Ageing</i>, Report No. 15 of 2002-2003; • <i>Grants Management, ATSIIC</i>, Report No. 2 of 2002-2003; • <i>Municipal Services for Indigenous Communities, ATSIIC</i>, Report No. 36 of 2000-2001; and • <i>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program</i>, Department of Health and Aged Care, Report No. 13 of 1998-99. <p>In view of the extent of this coverage, it is proposed to consider another audit of indigenous health for inclusion in the ANAO's 2006-2007 programme.</p>
House Environment and Heritage	Protection of critical habitat and listed threatened species under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> included as a potential audit in ANAO work plan for	The ANAO has included this in the Audit Work Programme as a potential audit topic for 2005-06.

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	<p>2004-05.</p> <p>Note: similar audit proposed by the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee.</p>	
<p>House Communications, Information Technology and the Arts</p>	<p>The committee request the ANAO to conduct a performance audit on the management of broadcasting spectrum in Australia.</p> <p>Broad casting spectrum is a valuable resource and needs to be managed efficiently. The Australian Broadcasting Authority and the Australian Communications Authority (to be merged by 1 July 2005) are responsible for the management of broadcasting spectrum, that is, the availability of segments of the broadcasting services bands used by radio, television and other services for analogue and digital broadcasting.</p>	<p>The ANAO will consider undertaking a performance audit in 2006-07 once the merger of Australian Broadcasting Authority and Australian Communications authority on 1 July 2005 has bedded down.</p>
<p>House Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</p>	<p>The committee has noted that the Australian National Audit Office work plan for 2004-05 included a potential follow-up audit on managing for quarantine effectiveness. It is our view that this proposed audit should be accorded high priority.</p>	<p>A follow-up audit of Managing for Quarantine Effectiveness is currently underway. It will be tabled in the spring 2005 Parliamentary session.</p>
<p>Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee</p>	<p>The key priority for the committee remains indigenous legal aid funding and the funding provided for legal aid in rural, regional and remote areas.</p>	<p>In November 2003, the ANAO tabled an audit assessing the then ATSI Law and Justice Programme. The ANAO concluded that, overall, ATSI had little information or assurance on the quality of the legal services being provided to Indigenous Australians. Subsequent to this audit, the JCPAA embarked on its own inquiry into Indigenous Law and Justice and tabled its report (Report 403) in June 2005. In this light the ANAO does not propose to do further work in this area in 2005-06.</p>

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	<p>An emerging concern for the committee is the funding of the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner. My Committee is currently inquiring into the overall effectiveness and appropriateness of the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i>(Cth) as a means by which to protect Australians. As part of this inquiry, my committee has been directed to examine resourcing of the Privacy Commissioners Office and whether current levels of funding and the resources available to the Privacy Commissioner enable her to properly fulfil her mandate.</p>	<p>We note the Committee is conducting an inquiry directed at the resources of the Privacy Commissioner and will take into account the Committee's report in our future audit coverage.</p>

