

CHAPTER 1

ANNUAL REPORTS OF DEPARTMENTS

1.1 The following reports of departments for the financial year 2006-07 were referred to the committee for examination and report:

- Attorney-General's Department.

Attorney-General's Department (AGD)

1.2 AGD reported an operating surplus for the reporting period of \$14.1 million.¹ This compared to a forecast surplus of \$13.1 million published in the 2007-08 Portfolio Budget Statements.² AGD cited lower than expected employee expenses as contributing to the discrepancy.³

1.3 As at 30 June 2007 AGD reported a total workforce of 1,329.⁴ This represented an increase of 21 per cent, compare with 30 June 2006.⁵ AGD reported:

The increase in ongoing employees can be directly attributed to the growth in the Department due to an increased focus on national security and emergency preparedness, coupled with an increase in demand for policy and legal advice in addition to providing new operational and vetting services.⁶

1.4 The percentage of non-ongoing employees in the AGD workforce increased from 11.8 per cent to 14.6 per cent.⁷ AGD attributed this increase to general departmental growth, staff separations and the market overall.⁸

Family Relationship Centres and Family Law Reform

1.5 AGD reported on the activities the 15 Family Relationship Centres established in July 2006.⁹ AGD noted that over 57, 000 people contacted a Family Relationship

1 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 262.

2 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 262.

3 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 262.

4 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 271.

5 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 271.

6 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 271.

7 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 271.

8 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 271.

9 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 31.

Centre in the 12 months following their establishment.¹⁰ AGD also completed the selection process for an additional 25 Family Relationship Centres.¹¹

1.6 AGD continued to be heavily involved with a range of measures to continue family law reform. Importantly, AGD assessed and developed a range of amendments to the Family Law Act.¹² AGD also worked closely with the Department of Families and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and the Child Support Agency (CSA) to introduce new services in the family law system.¹³ To help support family law reforms, AGD launched the Family Relationship Advice Line and Family Relationships Online.¹⁴ The committee congratulates those staff who received Australia Day Achievement Awards in relation to their work with family law reform, Family Relationship Centres, and the Family Relationship Advice Line.¹⁵

Legislation

1.7 AGD reported involvement in the development of many items of legislation, some of which were referred to the committee for examination, including:

- *Crime Amendment (Forensic Procedures) Act (No 1) 2006*¹⁶;
- *Crimes Legislation Amendment (National Investigative Powers and Witness Protection) Bill 2006*¹⁷;
- *Crimes Amendment (Bail and Sentencing) Act 2006*¹⁸;
- *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006*¹⁹; and
- *Copyright Amendment Act 2006*.²⁰

1.8 The committee considers the annual report of the Attorney-General's Department to be apparently satisfactory.²¹

10 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 3.

11 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 31.

12 *Annual Report*, p. 34.

13 *Annual Report*, p. 32.

14 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 31.

15 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 387.

16 *Annual Report 2006-07*, pp. 155-156.

17 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 155.

18 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 155.

19 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 156.

20 *Annual Report 2006-07*, p. 69.

21 Standing Order 25(20) requires the committee to "Examine each annual report referred to it and report to the Senate whether the report is apparently satisfactory".