



Administrative Appeals Tribunal

Registrar's opening statement

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing
22 October 2019

Thank you, Chair.

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) is a small but crucial part of the Australian Government's administrative decision-making process. We provide an opportunity for independent merits review of government decisions made under more than 400 pieces of legislation

Our 2018–2019 annual report was tabled in Parliament yesterday. As you may not yet have had time to review it in detail, I wanted to briefly highlight a few key statistics.

During the reporting period, we received 60,595 applications for review, the highest ever number of lodgements to the AAT. During the same period, we were able to finalise 44,413 applications. While this represents the highest number of finalisations ever achieved, it was just short of our published performance measure of 45,600 finalisations.

The AAT is a demand-driven organisation. We face ongoing challenges in our ability to meet that demand, largely as a result of large increases in the numbers of applications lodged in the Migration and Refugee Division. These types of applications are now at record levels, and have more than doubled over the past three years.

These challenges were reflected in other aspects of our performance in 2018–19, including a deterioration in the timeliness of our finalisations. Outside of the Migration and Refugee Division, we continue to meet or exceed our target of resolving more than 75 per cent of applications within 12 months from the time of lodgement. However, due to the increasing backlog and delays in the MRD, our overall result declined from 77 per cent in 2017–18 to 66 per cent in the 2018-19 year. This trend is set to continue.

On a positive note, we met or exceeded all other key performance measures in 2018–19.

The AAT remains committed to transparency as a means of building public trust and confidence. We remained one of the highest volume publishers of decisions amongst all courts and tribunals in Australia. During the reporting year, we published 5,905 decisions – 18 per cent higher than our performance target.

The proportion of appeals against AAT decisions which were allowed by the courts remains low, which is evidence of the quality of our decision-making, and there was improvement in our performance measure for the experience of Tribunal users including applicants and their representatives.

Thank you and I invite questions from the Committee.