

# Chapter 2

## Review of annual reports

2.1 This chapter examines selected annual reports in greater detail, and provides the Senate with information that may be of particular interest. The following reports are discussed in this chapter:

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority;
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership;
- Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency; and
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

### **Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority**

2.2 The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was established in December 2008 to administer a national school curriculum and assessments and to collect, manage and analyse data on school education and performance for publishing.<sup>1</sup>

2.3 In 2014–15, ACARA undertook work to address the initiatives endorsed by the Education Council. These initiatives were un-crowding and rebalancing the curriculum, improving accessibility for students with disability and parental engagement.<sup>2</sup>

2.4 ACARA worked consistently on the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Commonwealth, state and territory governments agreed to move NAPLAN testing from paper to an online test over a two to three year period. According to ACARA’s report, this digitalisation will result in better assessment, tailored testing, more accurate results and quicker turnaround of information than previously experienced.<sup>3</sup>

2.5 Throughout 2014-15, reporting remained a key component of the work undertaken by ACARA. Consistent with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) initiative to improve student attendance rates, leading to better learning outcomes, ACARA updated the *My School* website to include additional data disaggregated by indigeneity.<sup>4</sup>

---

1 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 8.

2 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 4.

3 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 4.

4 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, *Annual Report 14-15*, pp. 7, 25.

2.6 The Committee commends ACARA on a thorough and informative report, which complies with all reporting requirements.

### **Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership**

2.7 The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was established to provide national leadership for Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership. AITSL's role includes defining and maintaining standards for teachers and principals, supporting and recognising high quality professional practice and continuing to undertake the function of designated assessing authority for the purpose of skilled migration to Australia for pre-primary, middle, secondary and special education teacher occupations.<sup>5</sup>

2.8 In the 2014-15 reporting period, AITSL commenced work on implementing the Australian Government's response to the report titled *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers*. Specifically, AITSL sought to implement stronger quality assurance of teacher education courses, rigorous selection for entry to teacher education courses, improved and structured practical experience for teacher education students, robust assessment of graduated to ensure classroom readiness and national research and workforce planning capabilities.<sup>6</sup>

2.9 Further, AITSL continued to monitor and support the implementation of agreed national approaches to accreditation of Initial Teacher Education programs, the continued support and promulgation of the *Australian Professional Standards for Principals* and the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, and continued to fulfil the role of assessing authority under the Migration Regulations 1994 for the purpose of skilled migration as a teacher.<sup>7</sup>

2.10 The committee notes that AITSL incurred an operating loss of \$96 172.<sup>8</sup> However, the agency retains over \$400 000 in equity,<sup>9</sup> and remains in a position to pay accounts as and when they come in.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the Australian National Audit Office has not expressed concerns about the agency's 2014–15 financial statements.<sup>11</sup>

---

5 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 10.

6 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 26.

7 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 26.

8 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 27.

9 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, *Annual Report 14-15*, pp. 74–75.

10 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 51.

11 Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), *Audits of the Financial Statements of Australian Government Entities for the Period Ended 30 June 2015*, Audit Report No. 15, 2015–16, p. 147.

2.11 The committee commends AITSL for its continued work in promoting excellence in teaching standards.

### **Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency**

2.12 The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Authority (ASEA) was established in July 2013 under the *Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency Act 2013*. ASEA's primary duties include implementing the *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Awareness and Removal 2013–2018* (the National Strategic Plan) which prescribes a national approach for asbestos eradication, handling and awareness in Australia.<sup>12</sup>

2.13 The agency achieved its first three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relating to the implementation of the National Strategic Plan including:

- completing and releasing results of the benchmark survey to assess current levels of asbestos awareness within community groups by June 2015;
- facilitating the sharing of information about asbestos and asbestos safety by June 2015 through the delivery of the inaugural international Conference on Asbestos Awareness and Management in Melbourne in November 2014 and the establishment of two committees (detailed below); and
- examining best practice in asbestos-grading techniques for in-situ asbestos across Australian jurisdictions by June 2015.

2.14 The agency is on track to achieve the fourth KPI, developing best practice in asbestos-related training for use by specified sectors, by the June 2017 deadline.<sup>13</sup>

2.15 The two committees established to support the coordination and operation of the National Strategic Plan are the Building, Construction and Demolition Sectors Committee (BCDS) and the Research Advisory Committee (research committee).<sup>14</sup>

2.16 The BCDS held its inaugural meeting on 11 December 2014 and is comprised of industry, employer and employee representatives from the building, construction and demolition sectors. It will meet at least three times per year to provide advice on issues relating to the management of asbestos in the building, construction and demolition sectors and the implementation of the National Strategic Plan.<sup>15</sup>

2.17 The research committee held its inaugural meeting on 25 June 2015 and consists of members from a variety of areas including public health, workplace health and safety and research. It will meet at least three times per year to discuss the advice

---

12 Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 10.

13 Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 31.

14 Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 26.

15 Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 26.

it will provide to the agency on the design of a strategic research plan and assess proposals for research projects.<sup>16</sup>

2.18 Other highlights for 2014–15 included:

- revising the National Strategic Plan and obtaining formal endorsement from all state and territory governments in Australia on the revised *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2014–18* to deliver a truly national approach;
- continuing the management of the National Asbestos Exposure Register to monitor emerging asbestos risks and the community's awareness of potential asbestos exposure risks; and
- working with the Global Alliance Against Asbestos and campaigning to have chrysotile asbestos listed on Annex III to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedures of Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.<sup>17</sup>

2.19 The committee notes the excellent detail present in ASEA's annual report and commends the agency on its awareness raising work.

### **Workplace Gender Equality Agency**

2.20 The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is a statutory agency established under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*.<sup>18</sup>

2.21 The agency met all of its KPIs and exceeded its target for visits to the website. This is important for the agency's work as the website remains the key gateway for organisations to report on gender equality performance.<sup>19</sup>

2.22 One highlight over the 2014–15 reporting period was the release of WGEA's first comprehensive dataset on workplace gender equality in Australia. This is a world-leading dataset and was used to generate an interactive gender equality scorecard for use by researchers and industry. The scorecard highlighted an overall gender pay gap of 24.7 per cent.<sup>20</sup>

2.23 The WGEA also awarded its inaugural WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation to 76 organisations. The development of this citation as a roadmap for change is in accordance with WGEA's reporting requirements and

---

16 Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 27.

17 Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 9.

18 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 13.

19 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 19.

20 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 9.

---

reflects the change in legislation to promote and improve gender equality outcomes for both men and women.<sup>21</sup>

2.24 The WGEA also launched the pay equity program *In Your Hands*, which focused on educating organisations about gender bias and the potential for gender pay gaps in organisations. It encouraged organisations to conduct payroll analysis and correct gender disparity, and for CEOs to become pay equity ambassadors. By 30 September 2015, 85 CEOs signed a pay equity pledge. As of 30 June 2015, the campaign video had been watched more than 70 000 times and the pay equity tool kit had been downloaded almost 4500 times. Reporting data suggest the campaign resulted in a 17.6 per cent increase in the number of employers conducting payroll analysis in the 12 months since the campaign was launched.<sup>22</sup>

2.25 The committee commends WGEA for its work over the reporting period, particularly on the release of its world-leading dataset on workplace gender equality.

**Senator Bridget McKenzie**  
**Chair**

---

21 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 9.

22 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Annual Report 14-15*, p. 27.

