



21 December 2015

[Section 41](#) of the *Auditor-General Act 1997* establishes the position of the Independent Auditor.

The Independent Auditor report, *Review of Communications Processes*, was tabled in Parliament on 18 December 2015 and can be accessed on the ANAO website [here](#).

The report included 3 recommendations for the ANAO to enhance current communication processes. The ANAO's response to the recommendations and current status are outlined below.

### **Recommendation 1**

The ANAO should build on the initial work undertaken to identify the activities and methods currently used by the ANAO to communicate with its key stakeholder groups through:

- a) developing a communications strategy and plan to meet stakeholder preferences, with consideration of social media presence and including measures to monitor and evaluate the ANAO's communications;
- b) identifying opportunities for communicating insights and emerging themes across all engagements; and
- c) periodically evaluating performance of the ANAO's communications.

### **ANAO response included in report**

*Agreed.* The ANAO plans to finalise a communications strategy and plan as a priority that will include measures to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the ANAO's communications with internal and external stakeholders. The ANAO will also identify opportunities to disseminate common issues and themes arising from our financial statement and performance audits for the benefit of our stakeholders.

### **Current status**

The ANAO communications strategy and plan is well advanced. We will be completing an internal consultation process in early 2016, after which the strategy and plan will be finalised and implemented.

Through our audit work, the ANAO is in a unique position to provide insights and key themes on the effectiveness of public administration. In November the ANAO hosted an Audit Committee Chairs Forum, a jointly run forum with the Department of Finance. In this forum our Assurance and Performance Audit groups shared insights and themes emerging from work and our forward thinking on a range of matters. We will be convening a similar forum and providing a briefing to entity Chief Finance Officer's early in 2016 in which we intend to give an overview of our end of year report and the issues which arose in the most recent assurance audit cycle.

## Recommendation 2

Aligned to the communication strategy, the ANAO should review the need for hard copy reports other than those required for tabling purposes and increase efforts to meet the needs of stakeholders through electronic communication of reports. A key driver of this will be to improve the usability of the ANAO website, and enhance search functionality across the website and within published documents.

### ANAO response included in report

*Agreed.* The ANAO has now adopted a digital first policy. The delivery of audit reports that are digitally accessible across a variety of electronic platforms has been identified in the ANAO Corporate Plan 2015–19 as an area of immediate focus. The number of hard copy reports printed will be reduced to meet the minimum number required to satisfy Parliamentary tabling requirements. The number of discretionary hard copy audit reports printed will be substantially reduced and requests from external parties for hard copy publications will be requested to access publications from the ANAO's website.

### Current status

The ANAO has implemented our digital first policy and is no longer printing and distributing additional hard copy audit reports. The ANAO is currently redeveloping our website to provide easier navigation, enhanced search capability and to make our reports digitally accessible across a variety of electronic platforms. The release of our new website is planned for early 2016.

## Recommendation 3

The ANAO reviews the current performance audit reporting processes with a view to:

- a) provide greater clarity on suggested improvements outside of formal recommendations, making better use of data visualisation techniques, and preparing more succinct performance audit reports; and
- b) utilising the audit summary document currently provided to Parliamentarians to communicate audit results more directly to its broader stakeholders.

### ANAO response included in report

*Agreed.* The delivery of audit reports that are presented clearly, succinctly and directly to engage a broad range of stakeholders has been identified in the ANAO Corporate Plan 2015–19 as an area of immediate focus. The ANAO's revised approach to the presentation of its performance audit reports and other reviews involves producing reports that reflect the nature of the engagement and the complexity of the topic or issues involved. The use of visual techniques in will be increased and chapter summaries will be included in all performance audit reports. The ANAO will also identify ways in which to give greater visibility to suggested improvements made in reports and to make greater use of existing audit report summaries.

## **Current status**

The ANAO has adopted a new reporting format that includes the increased use of visual techniques and chapter summaries. This has resulted in improved usability of our reports and a noticeable decrease in overall size. The ANAO is continuing to identify ways in which to give greater visibility to suggested improvements made in reports and to make greater use of existing audit report summaries.