

The Joint Committee of Public
Accounts

Audit Strategy Seminar

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The purpose of today's session is to provide feedback on the preparation and merit of the ASDs. I realise that these documents require substantial preparation time and there has been some frustration at the number of iterations of the drafts in order to get a final product. I also understand the frustration of an agency indicating that they will undertake a program evaluation or an internal audit after we have included the topic for a performance audit.

On the issue of time taken, I agree with the suggestion that it is highly desirable for ASDs to be developed on an on-going basis during the year so that the final preparation should be minimal. With better understanding at all levels and on-going dialogue, I am confident that we can reduce the number of drafts required. As to the issue of duplication, you can be assured that I would be making the point quite strongly to my colleagues that we will be proceeding with an indicated performance audit and that they should regard our audit as part of their evaluation or assuredness for internal audit purposes.

This is your opportunity - we are here to listen.

The following are some thoughts that I have on the ASDs:

1. From an Audit Committee viewpoint, I consider the ASDs to be one of the best initiatives taken by the ANAO.
2. For the first time I considered we had the basis for a real dialogue.
3. ASDs indicated a professional approach - an earnest of intent about 'no surprises'.
4. ASDs facilitate not only the internal/external audit and evaluation programs but also the management of the co-operative involvement of other staff and their responses.
5. ASDs provide a better understanding of the basis of Audit selection, the management of our own risk and assistance for agencies in managing theirs.
6. In short, ASDs provide a sound basis for better planning all round.
7. Providing ASD plans to Parliament:
 - accountable for the product we promise; and
 - helps Committees keep in view the work of the ANAO, particularly any new Audit Committee.