

CHAPTER 04

**OUR USERS AND
OUR RELATIONSHIPS**

OUR USERS

The principal users of the Tribunal are the parties to proceedings in the Tribunal — individuals, organisations, government departments and agencies — and their representatives. This section reports on actions undertaken during the reporting period to meet Goal One in the Tribunal's Strategic Plan 2011–2014: to provide a high quality independent merits review process that is fair, just, economical, informal and quick.

This includes:

- promoting and facilitating the use of appropriate ADR processes
- providing accessible and effective registry services
- maintaining effective communication and engagement with our users and the public.

TRIBUNAL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

The Tribunal monitors the operation of the review process and seeks to identify ways in which practice and procedure can be improved to promote the effective and timely disposition of applications lodged with the Tribunal. The Practice and Procedure Consultative Group and the Practice and Procedure Committee oversee the Tribunal's management of applications made under the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act. The Consultative Group met in April 2013. The Practice and Procedure Committee met twice during the year, in November 2012 and June 2013. For information about membership of these committees, see Chapter 2.

Significant developments in relation to practice and procedure during the reporting period are discussed below.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION CASES

During the reporting year, the Australian Government commissioned reviews in relation to the operation of the two Commonwealth laws that deal with workers' compensation: the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* and the *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1992*. The Tribunal made submissions to both reviews identifying a range of issues that affect the Tribunal's ability to deal with applications for review of workers' compensation decisions in the most effective and efficient manner. The reports of both reviews included recommendations that respond to the issues raised by the Tribunal and, if implemented, would enhance the Tribunal's capacity to resolve disputes more quickly.

Working within the existing legislative frameworks, the Tribunal aims to finalise workers' compensation applications within 12 months of lodgement. During the reporting year, the Tribunal proposed some additional strategies to promote the timely progress of applications in this jurisdiction.

The Tribunal identified a range of matters that it expects represented parties will do prior to the first conference, and to report on and otherwise discuss at the first conference. These include conferring about what the applicant is seeking and the issues in dispute as well as considering whether additional medical evidence or other investigations will be required and, if so, making appointments or other arrangements. The Tribunal is proposing to issue a standard notice to the parties at the commencement of an application setting out the Tribunal's expectations as to what must be done before the first case event and, more generally, how the application will be progressed. The notice will specify the months by which the Tribunal expects any conciliation or hearing will take place to ensure the application is finalised within 12 months. This will provide the Tribunal and the parties with a framework within which to manage progress of the case.

The Tribunal also developed two draft practice directions during the reporting year to deal with practice and procedure issues that arise most commonly in workers' compensation cases.

The first practice direction relates to the implied undertaking that a party may not, without the leave of the Tribunal, use a document that has been provided under compulsion in a Tribunal proceeding for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was given. The draft Practice Direction relating to Release from the Implied Undertaking proposes that, if the implied undertaking applies to documents in an application currently before the Tribunal and the Tribunal is dealing with one or more other applications involving the same applicant at the same time, documents provided to the Tribunal in one application may be used in each of the other applications, subject to any other direction that the Tribunal may make. In any other circumstance, a party must apply in writing for leave to be released from the implied undertaking.

The second draft practice direction relates to the disclosure of video surveillance material. Such material has not generally been made available to the applicant or the Tribunal prior to its use during an applicant's cross-examination at the hearing. The draft Practice Direction relating to the Use of Video Surveillance Material proposes to require any party intending to rely on video surveillance material to disclose its existence and make the content available to the other party and the Tribunal prior to the hearing.

The Tribunal's proposals, including the two draft practice directions, were circulated to key stakeholders and made available on the Tribunal's website for comment. The Tribunal will implement the final set of changes in the next reporting period.

PRACTICE DIRECTION ON TIMING OF REQUESTS UNDER SECTION 50A OF THE ARCHIVES ACT 1983 OR SECTION 60A OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 1982

When reviewing a decision under the *Archives Act 1983* or the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* about access to documents that relate to the security, defence or international relations of the Commonwealth, the Tribunal must, before determining that a document is not an exempt document under those Acts, request the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security to appear and give evidence in relation to the documents. This procedure is set out in section 50A of the Archives Act and section 60A of the Freedom of Information Act.

In October 2012, the Tribunal and the Inspector-General entered into a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out the procedures to be followed in cases in which section 50A of the Archives Act or section 60A of the Freedom of Information Act may apply. On 5 December 2012, the Tribunal issued a practice direction which sets out the factors to be taken into account by the Tribunal when considering when to make a request under s 50A of the Archives Act or s 60A of the Freedom of Information Act and, in particular, whether to make the request prior to, or at the time of, the agency giving evidence or making submissions about the documents.

The practice direction is available on the Tribunal's website.

REVIEW OF DISABILITYCARE AUSTRALIA DECISIONS

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act) was passed by the Parliament in March 2013 nominating the Tribunal as the external review body for decisions made under the Act. The Tribunal has jurisdiction to review a wide range of decisions made by DisabilityCare Australia, including decisions about who is eligible to access the scheme, the supports provided under the scheme and the registration of providers of supports.

The Tribunal worked closely with the NDIS Taskforce and the Attorney-General's Department during the reporting period in relation to the proposal that the Tribunal undertake the external review function. The President and the Registrar met with the NDIS Advisory Group to discuss the Tribunal's potential role and how it would review decisions.

On 1 July 2013, the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Legislation Amendment Act 2013* amended the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act to create the NDIS Division. All reviews of decisions made under the NDIS Act will be conducted in the new division. The amending Act also introduced requirements relating to the assignment of non-presidential members to the division. Before a Senior Member or Member can be assigned to the NDIS Division, the Attorney-General must:

- be satisfied that the member has training, knowledge or experience relating to disability or other relevant knowledge or experience that will assist them in considering matters relating to the scheme

- must consult the Minister responsible for administering the NDIS Act about the proposed assignment.

The Tribunal has developed a case management model for the review of DisabilityCare Australia decisions that is designed to be accessible, fair, informal and quick. The model includes assigning a dedicated AAT Contact Officer for each applicant as soon as an application is received. The Tribunal has issued a practice direction and a series of fact sheets that explain in plain English how the Tribunal will conduct the reviews. These are available on the Tribunal's website.

The Tribunal has been undertaking work in a range of other areas to prepare for applications under the NDIS Act. The Tribunal is liaising with DisabilityCare Australia and other key stakeholders about issues relating to the operation of the proposed review process.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Tribunal makes extensive use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). It is a core element of the review process. ADR processes assist the parties reach agreement or narrow the issues in dispute and contributes to a review process that is economical, informal and quick as well as fair and just.

A new position of Director, Alternative Dispute Resolution, was created and filled in May 2013 to promote and enhance the use of ADR in the Tribunal. The Director has started informal consultations on how to build on the Tribunal's current strengths in ADR and has visited each registry and liaised with several key stakeholders.

All Conference Registrars and several Tribunal members were accredited or re-accredited as mediators under the National Mediator Accreditation Standards in 2012–13. As at 30 June, the Tribunal had 23 accredited mediators who meet the national standards. The Tribunal is a Recognised Mediator Accreditation Body. This supports the Tribunal's policy that mediations will be conducted only by members and Conference Registrars who are accredited mediators. Conferences and conciliations will also ordinarily be conducted by accredited mediators. Maintaining accreditation is a key measure to ensure quality and consistency in mediation practice within the Tribunal.

The Tribunal's Conference Registrars met and workshopped possible ADR process and practice improvements in Brisbane in May 2013. A number of the suggestions will be explored further in developing an integrated dispute resolution strategy for the Tribunal. Opportunities for ADR practice improvements have also been built into the case management model for the review of DisabilityCare Australia decisions. These developments will contribute to the ongoing review of the Tribunal's Alternative Dispute Resolution Referral Guidelines. Work also commenced during the reporting year on improving the availability of performance data on ADR processes. This will be further developed in 2013–14.

The Tribunal continued to raise awareness of its ADR processes with external stakeholders during the reporting year. Members and staff spoke at external conferences and seminars about the Tribunal's approach. The Tribunal was an active member of the ADR Inter-Agency Group, a forum for Australian Government agencies which encourages sharing information and training resources for alternative dispute resolution. Members and staff were also active members of a number of other committees, including the ACT Law Society's ADR Committee, the Australian Taxation Office's National Tax Liaison Group Dispute Resolution Sub-committee, the Law Council of Australia's Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee and the Law Society of New South Wales's Dispute Resolution Committee.

During the reporting year, the Tribunal also agreed to participate in an independent study into the use and effectiveness of dispute resolution processes in tax disputes. The research is being conducted by the Australian Centre for Justice Innovation at Monash University and is being led by Member Professor Tania Sourdin.

CHANGES TO THE TRIBUNAL'S ACT AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO FEES

ACCESS TO JUSTICE (FEDERAL JURISDICTION) AMENDMENT ACT 2012

The *Access to Justice (Federal Jurisdiction) Amendment Act 2012* was enacted during the reporting year and contained, amongst a number of measures, amendments to provisions of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act relating to fees. The amendments commenced on 11 June 2013.

The amending Act repealed section 29A which specified that an application was not taken to be made unless a prescribed fee had been paid. A new section 69C was introduced which provides that the Tribunal may dismiss an application if a fee has not been paid within the time specified in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Regulations. As the power to dismiss is discretionary, the Tribunal can allow an applicant additional time to pay an application fee in appropriate circumstances. These changes will enable the Tribunal to deal with the payment of fees in a more flexible manner.

The *Access to Justice (Federal Jurisdiction) Amendment Act 2012* also amended section 70 of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act, the regulation-making power, to broaden the power to make regulations for the payment of fees in relation to Tribunal proceedings.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS TRIBUNAL AMENDMENT (FEES) REGULATION 2013

The *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Amendment (Fees) Regulation 2013* was made on 30 May 2013 and introduced a number of changes to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Regulations.

On 11 June 2013, amendments were made which relate to the repeal of section 29A and the introduction of section 69C in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act. The Regulations provide that a fee for lodging an application is payable at the time the application is lodged. If the fee is not paid at that time, the Tribunal is not required to deal with the application unless, and until, the fee is paid. If the fee is not paid within six weeks after the application is lodged, the Tribunal may dismiss the application under section 69C.

Some further changes to the Regulations took effect on 1 July 2013. They were amended to provide that no fee is payable for lodging an application for review of a decision made under the NDIS Act. Some outdated references to provisions in other legislation were also corrected.

eSERVICES

The Tribunal is committed to providing accessible and effective services to our users and the public which includes developing online service options. In 2012–13, the Tribunal resolved to manage as a program the implementation of a suite of integrated systems to deliver online services and manage information electronically. The program encompasses a range of projects, some already underway and others to be undertaken over coming years. They include the development of AAT Online, the Tribunal's platform for a suite of services that will enable more efficient information exchange and delivery.

The first AAT Online service, eCase Search, was launched by the Tribunal in March 2013. Accessible 24 hours a day, eCase Search allows parties, their representatives and the public to search for, and access, select information about most Tribunal applications lodged from 18 March 2013. Parties and representatives can check the date and time of the next listing in their case or whether another party has lodged a particular document without needing to contact a registry.

During the reporting year, the Tribunal completed the implementation of a set of protocols and system changes that, pending the introduction of an electronic lodgement facility, will enable the Tribunal to increase the use of email as a primary means of communicating with parties and their representatives. The protocols cover matters such as the addresses to which emails may be sent, the types of documents that can be emailed to the Tribunal and the file formats and sizes that will be accepted.

In May 2013, the Tribunal commenced a pilot project with the Australian Taxation Office for the electronic notification of applications lodged in three of the Tribunal's registries. The pilot will be reviewed in 2013–14 and recommendations made in relation to the potential to extend the practice to all registries and for other decision-makers.

In 2013–14, the Tribunal will work on the development of online forms to offer applicants additional ways of applying to the Tribunal.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH TRIBUNAL USERS

The Tribunal communicates with its users in a variety of ways to assist their understanding of its role and procedures. The Tribunal also uses a range of methods to engage with, and seek feedback from, its users in relation to the services that it provides.

AAT ALERTS AND THE AAT BULLETIN

AAT Alerts are emails issued to ‘opt-in’ subscribers on a range of matters such as changes to fees, requests for comment on proposed changes to practice and procedure and invitations to attend liaison meetings in local registries. Eight AAT Alerts were issued over the course of the reporting year.

From October 2012, the AAT Bulletin, a weekly publication compiled by the Tribunal’s Legal and Policy area, has been made available to external users. It provides information on recent Tribunal decisions and information on appeals against Tribunal decisions. It also includes information on changes to the Tribunal’s jurisdiction and other important developments.

As at 30 June 2013, there were more than 750 subscribers to the AAT Alerts service and 370 subscribers to the AAT Bulletin.

CONSULTATION WITH USERS

As part of its commitment to being an open and transparent organisation, the Tribunal met with regular users and other stakeholders during 2012–13.

The President and Registrar met with the heads of a number of departments and agencies whose decisions are reviewed by the Tribunal, including the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissioner, the Australian Information Commissioner, the Clean Energy Regulator, the Chief Executive Officer of Comcare and the Secretaries of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. Senior Tribunal staff met with senior managers from the Department of Human Services to discuss a range of operational issues arising in the child support and social security jurisdictions and there was ad hoc liaison with a range of other agencies, including the Australian Taxation Office and the Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. The Tribunal also liaised with law enforcement agencies about the arrangements for dealing with applications for Tribunal members to exercise powers in their personal capacity.

District Registries arranged local liaison meetings with persons and organisations who appear regularly before the Tribunal – departments, agencies and other decision-makers, private legal practitioners, community legal centres and legal aid bodies. Some registries held meetings with users from all jurisdictions while others arranged jurisdiction-specific meetings. The meetings are a forum in which the Tribunal can inform users of changes to practice and procedure and users can give feedback on the service the Tribunal is providing.

AGENCY MULTICULTURAL PLAN

In 2012–13, the Tribunal prepared its first Agency Multicultural Plan (AMP) in accordance with the Australian Government's strengthened Multicultural Access and Equity Policy which aims to improve responsiveness of government services to Australia's multicultural communities. The Tribunal engages with many people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in performing its role and strives to be accessible and responsive to their needs.

The AMP sets out actions the Tribunal will take over the two-year period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2015 to maintain and improve its performance in relation to the provision of services to users from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The Tribunal's aim is to ensure that good practices are embedded in how we deliver our services.

Particular areas of focus in the Tribunal's first AMP include formalising, in strategies and plans, the Tribunal's existing commitment to multicultural access and equity, ensuring these issues are considered routinely in strategic planning and projects, strengthening the capability of members and staff to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse users and reviewing processes and information products to ensure they meet the needs of those users.

The Tribunal's AMP was approved in July 2013 and is available on the Tribunal's website. The Tribunal will report on its progress in relation to the AMP in the next annual report.

INDIGENOUS ACCESS TO THE TRIBUNAL

An Indigenous Access Working Group was established in 2011–12 to identify and plan the implementation of strategies to improve Indigenous access to the Tribunal.

During the reporting period, the Group continued to work on a pilot program in the Adelaide Registry to promote communication and consultation with legal centres who deal with Indigenous clients in relation to family assistance and social security issues.

The Group continues to explore options for relevant cultural competency training. As an element of this strategy, the online training program offered by the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia (CCCA) was recently trialled and favourably evaluated by Group members. The CCCA training program comprises ten components aimed at providing increased awareness of the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their culture and kinship, enhancing skills for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and with local Indigenous communities.

The Group has commenced work on developing protocols for working with Indigenous users and on customised resources to be used during local community engagement activities and during information sessions for Indigenous legal service providers. The Group is also networking with law schools to promote Indigenous internship opportunities.

OUR RELATIONSHIPS

This section reports on actions undertaken to meet Goal Four in the Tribunal's Strategic Plan 2011–2014: to engage effectively with Government, tribunals, the legal profession and other interested organisations in Australia and internationally. This includes:

- contributing to strategic discussions, reviews and forums dealing with administrative review and related issues in Australia
- establishing and maintaining cooperative and collaborative engagements with courts and other tribunals, and with our international counterparts
- promoting greater understanding of the Tribunal and its role within the broader context of the AAT as an agency aimed at improving the accountability and transparency of government and the quality of government decision-making.

DEVELOPING AND ENHANCING LINKS WITH GOVERNMENT, OTHER TRIBUNALS, ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

The Tribunal maintained and developed its relationships with a range of departments and agencies, organisations and individuals during 2012–13.

LIAISON WITH THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT, OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

The Tribunal worked closely with the Attorney-General's Department during the reporting year on a wide range of issues relating to the Tribunal and its operations, including the Tribunal's membership, jurisdiction, legislation and budget.

The Tribunal also liaises with other departments and agencies in the context of reviews that relate to work undertaken by the Tribunal or in relation to proposals that may impact on the Tribunal. The Tribunal liaised with the Department of Health and Ageing in relation to the arrangements for applying for the issue of search warrants or the exercise of related powers under the *Tobacco Plain Packaging Act 2011*. The Tribunal also liaised with the Department regarding the exposure draft of the Biosecurity Bill 2012 and the proposed jurisdiction for the Tribunal to undertake an expedited review of certain decisions relating to human health biosecurity measures.

SUBMISSIONS TO INQUIRIES AND REVIEWS

In 2012–13, the Tribunal made submissions to the following reviews:

- review of the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (October 2012)
- review of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Australian Information Commissioner Act 2010* (December 2012)
- review of the Seacare Scheme (December 2012)
- review of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services (February 2013).

The Tribunal made a brief submission in December 2012 to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in relation to their inquiry into the Migration and Security Legislation Amendment (Review of Security Assessments) Bill 2012.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COUNCIL

The President of the Tribunal is an ex officio member of the Administrative Review Council. The Council's role is to monitor, and provide advice to government on, the operation of the Commonwealth system of administrative law.

For further information relating to the Council and its operations, please refer to the Council's annual report.

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALASIAN TRIBUNALS

The Tribunal is a member of the Council of Australasian Tribunals (COAT), an association for tribunals and those who work in, or have an interest in, tribunals in Australia and New Zealand. It consists of a National Council with local chapters, and was established to facilitate discussion and collaboration on matters relevant to tribunals.

The Tribunal continued its involvement in the Council during the year, participating in COAT conferences as well as other training and networking opportunities. Tribunal members and staff were active contributors to the work of the Council. Justice Kerr became the Treasurer of the National COAT Executive in June 2013. Senior Member Anne Britton continued in her roles as the Secretary for the National COAT Executive and Convenor of the New South Wales Chapter. Deputy President Katherine Bean was the Secretary for the South Australian Chapter, and Member Regina Pertou and District Registrar Susan Woodford were committee members of the Victorian Chapter.

LIAISON WITH OTHER COMMONWEALTH TRIBUNALS

The Commonwealth merits review tribunals — the AAT, Migration Review Tribunal/Refugee Review Tribunal (MRT-RRT), Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT) and the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) — maintained their cooperative relationship in a range of ways during 2012–13. Information about formal liaison arrangements are outlined below. There was also ongoing liaison and communication between officers of the tribunals about matters such as learning and development activities, property, staff vacancies and workforce planning.

Commonwealth Tribunals Collaborative Forum

The Commonwealth Tribunals Collaborative Forum was established in June 2012 following acceptance by the Australian Government of a recommendation in the *Report of the Strategic Review of Small and Medium Agencies in the Attorney-General's Portfolio*. The role of the Forum is to:

- identify and support the implementation of efficiencies or improvements that might be achieved by cooperative or shared efforts between the AAT, MRT-RRT, SSAT and VRB
- help with the identification and adoption of best practice tribunal administration by, and increase cooperation between, all Commonwealth merits review bodies.

The Forum is convened by Justice Kerr and comprises the Principal Member and Registrar of each of the tribunals and representatives of the relevant portfolio departments. The Forum met on six occasions during the financial year. Its first report was provided to the Government in October 2012.

In its first year, the Forum:

- completed a detailed review of the recommendations of the Tribunal Efficiencies Working Group Report that was completed in 2004 to determine which of them might be given further consideration
- oversaw the preparation and adoption of a new Memorandum of Understanding on Learning and Development, which reaffirmed the commitment and existing arrangements between the tribunals for cooperative action and communication about learning and development activities
- established a Technology Working Party to identify and oversee collaborative projects concerning the use of technology – the Working Party has been asked to examine the feasibility of establishing a merits review tribunals web portal and to develop a high-level protocol to manage the naming and format of electronic documents used in tribunal proceedings.

The Forum's second report will be provided to the Government early in the 2013–14 financial year.

Commonwealth Heads of Tribunals

In April 2013, the President of the Tribunal arranged for the reinstatement of the Commonwealth Heads of Tribunals (CHOT) forum, which includes the AAT, MRT-RRT, SSAT, VRB and National Native Title Tribunal.

It is anticipated that the CHOT forum will meet twice a year to discuss matters of mutual interest that fall outside the scope of the Collaborative Forum, with the first meeting scheduled for August 2013. CHOT meetings may also provide an opportunity to meet with key agencies or bodies, and to hear from guest speakers on topics relevant to tribunal management.

OTHER FORUMS

The Tribunal participated in the activities of the Australian Institute of Administrative Law during the year, including the National Administrative Law Conference. Senior Member Professor Robin Creyke was an officer of the National Executive of the Institute and Member Regina Perton was a committee member of the Victorian Chapter.

District Registrar Clare Byrt was chair of the Law Society of South Australia's Administrative Law Committee. She also chaired a South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal subcommittee for the Law Society which organised a symposium on 'Best Practice in Tribunals: A Model for South Australia' in June 2013.

RESOURCE-SHARING ARRANGEMENTS

The Tribunal had in place arrangements with a number of organisations in relation to the provision of facilities and services in 2012–13, details of which are below.

Federal Court

The Tribunal and the Federal Court operate a joint registry in Hobart. Court staff provide registry services and conduct ADR processes for the Tribunal.

Migration Review Tribunal/Refugee Review Tribunal

The Tribunal provides accommodation and hearing room facilities for MRT-RRT members, including hearing room assistance and videoconferencing facilities, in Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. Tribunal staff receive applications and handle enquiries on behalf of the MRT-RRT.

Social Security Appeals Tribunal

The Tribunal provides hearing rooms and related facilities for the SSAT in its Canberra Registry.

Supreme Court of Norfolk Island

The Tribunal has an agreement with the Norfolk Island Administration for the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island to provide basic registry services in relation to applications made to the Tribunal for review of decisions of the Norfolk Island Government.

Veterans' Review Board

The Tribunal made facilities available in its registries in Adelaide, Canberra and Perth for the VRB to conduct hearings.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND DELEGATIONS

International Association of Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions

The Tribunal is a member of the International Association of Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions (IASAJ), an organisation for bodies that are empowered to adjudicate public law disputes. The association's purpose is to promote the exchange of ideas and experiences between jurisdictions. The IASAJ was founded in 1983, and the Tribunal has been a member since 2004.

Justice Kerr is a member of the Board of the association.

International delegations

The Tribunal regularly hosts visitors from international courts and tribunals and other organisations and individuals interested in gathering information on the Tribunal and its operations. These visits also provide an opportunity for the Tribunal to learn about the public law systems of other countries and how similar organisations undertake their work.

The Tribunal welcomed the following visitors during 2012–13:

- a delegation from the National Anti-Corruption Commission of Thailand led by its President, Mr Panthep Klanarongran
- Brian Thompson, a Member of the British Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council
- a delegation from the Supreme Commercial Court of the Russian Federation led by its Chief Justice, Mr Anton Ivanov.

International training and development

In 2012, the Federal Court conducted a Commercial Case Management Workshop and a Court-Annexed Mediation Workshop as part of the Pacific Judicial Capacity Building Program. Several participating countries requested follow-up assistance.

In February 2013, the Tribunal's Learning and Development Manager, Athena Harris Ingall, travelled to Kosrae, an island state of the Federated States of Micronesia. Ms Harris Ingall conducted mediation skills training for potential mediators and refresher training for certified court-annexed mediators. Conference Registrar Kim Lackenby travelled to Samoa to provide follow-up support in relation to both alternative dispute resolution and commercial case management.

BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRIBUNAL AND ITS ROLE

The Tribunal undertook a range of activities aimed at promoting a better understanding of the Tribunal and its role in administrative law.

TRIBUNAL PARTICIPATION IN EXTERNAL CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Members and staff gave presentations about the Tribunal and its operations at a number of external conferences, seminars and forums during the reporting period. See Appendix 8 for more information on these activities.

The Tribunal participated in the National Law Week Community Legal Expos held in Parramatta and Campbelltown in New South Wales in May 2013. Conference Registrars and other staff members provided information about the Tribunal to more than 150 interested members of the public.

MOOTING COMPETITION

The Tribunal held its eighth National Mooting Competition for Australian university students between June and October 2012. The moots are abridged versions of Tribunal hearings adjudicated by members of the Tribunal. The competition allows students to demonstrate their research and advocacy skills and provides a unique opportunity for students to expand their knowledge and understanding of merits review processes. Twenty-eight teams participated in the 2012 competition.

The final involved teams from the University of Melbourne and the University of Queensland mooting before Justice Kerr, Deputy President James Constance and Senior Member Egon Fice. The winning team was the University of Queensland comprising Heath Manning, Aanand Jayachandran and Portia Tyle. Members of the University of Melbourne team were Thomas Wood, Ben Murphy and Nicholas Baum. The Registrar's Best Oralist Prize, donated by the Law Council of Australia, was presented to Aanand Jayachandran of the University of Queensland.

SPONSORING WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

The Tribunal seeks to provide a range of opportunities for work experience candidates, creating meaningful opportunities for the students to develop an understanding of the Tribunal's role and processes.

The Adelaide Registry provided placements for two students as part of the University of Adelaide Public Law Internship Program. Short placements were also offered to two law students as part of the Indigenous Cadetship program run by the South Australian Legal Services Commission. Another short placement was provided to an officer from the Ombudsman's Office of Papua New Guinea who had been sponsored by the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Three students from Bond University accepted placements at the Brisbane Registry attending a number of hearings and observing the work of the Tribunal. In April 2013, Brisbane Registry hosted approximately 60 Year 5 and 6 children from a local primary school.

The Hobart Registry (in conjunction with the President's Chambers located in Hobart) provided a placement for a student from the University of Tasmania.

The Tribunal provided opportunities for students to undertake a placement in the Melbourne Registry through an agreement with the Leo Cussen Centre for Law. In addition, Deputy President Constance spoke to a group of students from the Centre who visited the Tribunal during the last financial year.

The Tribunal continues to maintain its relationship with the University of Wollongong, placing one student in the Sydney Registry in the reporting period. The Tribunal is also a Partner Organisation in the University of New South Wales Law Faculty Public Interest Internship Program. Sydney Registry offered work experience to nine students giving them the opportunity to gain practical legal experience with a designated supervisor/mentor.