



Chapter 5:
Our people and our organisation

This chapter outlines the Tribunal's performance in meeting the goals identified in the 2007–08 Organisational Plan for its people and the organisation. It also provides more general information on human resource management and the Tribunal's administration and governance.

OUR PEOPLE

The Tribunal's goal in relation to its people is:

To maintain professional standards and a positive, safe and productive workplace that values diversity.

This section of the report describes the activities undertaken by the Tribunal during the reporting period that are directed to meeting this goal. It also provides a range of other information relating to human resource management in the Tribunal.

Learning and development in the Tribunal

Learning and development remains a priority in the Tribunal. The reporting year saw the further refinement of a number of ongoing activities and the implementation of some new initiatives to meet the needs of members and staff of the Tribunal.

Members' Professional Development

The Members' Professional Development Program is a comprehensive program based on a framework of competencies developed for the Tribunal. The program comprises induction, mentoring, appraisal and other professional development opportunities. The Professional Development Committee maintained its important role in advising on the program and its development. The committee met in October 2007 and June 2008.

Learning activities for members are developed with reference to the Tribunal's framework of competencies. A range of activities are offered that assist members to remain up to date with developments relevant to their work.

Most Registries have a program of regular local professional development meetings. On occasion, other Registries participate by videoconference or telephone, encouraging shared learning. Local members take responsibility for organising these sessions. They may involve guest speakers, a member-led discussion on an issue or a tutorial. A wide range of topics was covered in 2007–08 including updates on significant cases, aspects of practice and procedure and cultural awareness.

A workshop on decision writing was conducted by Professor James Raymond in the Tribunal in September 2007. Most members of the Tribunal have now attended a decision writing course. Interest remains high in further developing skills in this area.

Formal and informal mentoring, self-assessment and peer review provide further opportunities for professional development within the Tribunal. Senior Member Narelle Bell continued as the Coordinator of the Mentoring Scheme in 2007–08. Deputy President Deane Jarvis continued in his role as Appraisal Scheme Coordinator.

The Tribunal's appraisal scheme combines self-assessment with appraisal by another Tribunal member against the framework of competencies. The self-assessment and peer review process provides members with an opportunity to reflect upon their practice and consider options for further professional development.

Tribunal members are encouraged to share their expertise not only with their peers and Tribunal staff, but also with the wider profession and members of other Tribunals through participation in organisations such as the Council of Australasian Tribunals (COAT). Members learn from colleagues working in other jurisdictions by attending conferences, including the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration/COAT Tribunals' Conference and the annual conference of the Australian Institute of Administrative Law.

National Conference

One of the most important professional development activities held during the reporting period was the Tribunal's National Conference held in October 2007. Members, District Registrars, Conference Registrars and Principal Registry staff attended the conference. The theme for the conference was "30 years on, rethinking our way to the correct or preferable decision". In keeping with this theme, proceedings included sessions on evaluating current practices, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes, decision writing, evidence and current issues and recent developments in merits review.

Staff learning and development

The organisation-wide staff learning and development program is aligned with the Tribunal's Organisational Plan and reflects the

values of the Tribunal. The program also seeks to meet the learning needs of individuals and teams across all Registries.

During the reporting year, the staff learning and development calendar included learning activities offered in response to identified training needs. Sessions were delivered in a variety of modes and the topic areas covered included Tribunal practice and procedure issues, working effectively with self-represented parties, editing and proofreading, online legal research, self-management skills, videoconferencing as a communication tool and cultural awareness and diversity.

Staff also attended relevant external short courses, seminars, workshops and conferences.



Attendees at the Tribunal's National Conference held in October 2007.

The Tribunal's Studies Assistance Scheme provides another avenue for staff of the Tribunal to develop their own capability, as well as that of the Tribunal, through vocational education at pre-tertiary, undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Most staff participating in the scheme undertook legal studies, while others undertook studies in public sector management, education and training.

Staff induction and support networks

The Staff Induction Working Party reviewed and revised the Tribunal's generic staff induction program. A checklist was developed together with two workbooks for new starters. The Human Resources Section is currently working towards implementing the revised program.

The Tribunal continues to seek innovative ways to develop its staff. The introduction of the Members Support Staff Network has proven to be a popular forum in which legal and administrative staff who assist the members share ideas and remain abreast of developments in the law. Brian Du Bois, Team Leader of the Members Support Team in Melbourne, has led many of the initiatives which have contributed to the success of the network.

Another successful learning and development innovation has been the creation of a Co-Mentoring Program for Conference Registrars. Conference Registrar Bernadette Rogers and Assistant Registrar Megan Cassidy promoted the program which has now evolved into a scheme where Conference Registrars contact their matched peer, usually monthly, to discuss their work.

Tribunal Practice Manual

The Tribunal is developing a practice manual that will complement the COAT Practice Manual for Tribunals. The COAT manual covers a range of topics that are relevant to tribunals generally, including statutory interpretation, procedural fairness, conducting hearings and making decisions. The Tribunal Practice Manual will include material that relates specifically to the Tribunal's role and functions.

The Tribunal manual is intended to provide members and Conference Registrars with a readily-accessible overview of law and practice in a number of areas, including Tribunal practice and procedure and the major jurisdictions. It will include references to legislation and policy, case law and other resources.

The manual's content is being drafted by members of the Tribunal to ensure it has a practical focus. Work commenced during 2007–08 and will continue in the next reporting period.

A positive, safe and productive workplace that values diversity

Occupational health and safety

The Tribunal gives priority to the health and work safety of its members and staff. In accordance with Comcare requirements and to assist in monitoring occupational health and safety issues, the Tribunal has a national Health and Safety Committee which includes staff representatives from each Registry. The committee meets regularly by telephone to discuss issues including site reports, incident reporting and recent information releases from Comcare.

The Health and Safety Committee was re-established in September 2007 under the amended Commonwealth health and safety framework. This led to expressions of interest being sought from staff to perform the roles of Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and Deputy HSRs. Representatives have attended appropriate training from providers.

Targeted occupational health and safety training relating to appropriate workstation set-up was conducted in Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney in 2007–08. This included individual workstation screenings.

Workplace assessments are undertaken by the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service or similar providers for the benefit of staff where occupational health and safety problems are identified. Assessments are conducted in relation to matters such as posture, workstation set-up and equipment

requirements. Remedial action is implemented. Case management of compensation matters is conducted either in-house or by external service providers, depending on the location and the complexity of the matter.

The Comcare Occupational Health and Safety Incident Reporting Guidelines are in place and are supplemented with Tribunal instructions. There was one incident reported to Comcare during 2007–08 relating to flooding and water damage in the Registry in Perth. There were no investigations into the Tribunal's operations.

The Tribunal is finalising the replacement of its current Occupational Health and Safety Policy with new Health and Safety Management Arrangements.

Member/staff survey

The Tribunal conducted a survey in 2008 which gave members and staff an opportunity to express their views about workplace issues and the overall performance of the Tribunal.

The Tribunal compared the responses from its staff against the results in the Australian Public Service Commission's 2006–07 'State of the Service' survey and, in particular, the results for small agencies. The exercise indicated that the Tribunal is well-placed in comparison with other small agencies and across the APS. The survey has provided management with some quantitative data that can be used for future planning exercises.

Productivity gains

The Tribunal is pursuing several initiatives designed to achieve further productivity gains in its operations.

The broad-based learning and development program continues to address the identified learning needs of employees and the Tribunal. Training initiatives have been conducted to improve personal and professional, registry-wide capability. Examples of training include:

- editing and proofreading courses to enable legal staff to more effectively undertake editing for Tribunal members;
- participation in internal and external courses and seminars to cultivate productive working relationships;
- videoconferencing training to ensure more effective provision of videoconferencing, including troubleshooting skills;
- learning about marshalling professional expertise using communication and problem-solving skills to work effectively with Tribunal users;
- diversity training to harness understanding of different perspectives and improve individuals' capacity to work in a cross-cultural setting;
- security updates to increase confidence and decrease concern regarding managing potentially challenging encounters and situations; and
- co-mentoring to draw on information and alternative viewpoints to enhance professional expertise.

The member/staff survey also gave members and staff the opportunity to contribute ideas about areas for improvement within the Tribunal.

The Tribunal's electronic case management system, TRACS, has undergone further enhancement which has provided greater functionality to all users. It is anticipated that the system will facilitate a range of more efficient work practices and time-saving measures over time.

The Information Technology (IT) Section has successfully utilised the WebEx web-conferencing tool to organise online meetings between Registries. The tool reduces the need for trainers to travel to other Registries.

The Tribunal engaged external experts to review the structure and operations of the Principal Registry. A separate and additional review was conducted of the IT Section and its responsibilities.

Administrative Appeals Tribunal Benevolent Trust

A benevolent trust funded by voluntary contributions from members and staff and managed by elected trustees was established in 2003. The purpose of the trust is to assist any employees or members of the Tribunal and their immediate families who may require financial assistance. In 2007–08, the trustees approved one grant of assistance to a staff member who had been affected by misfortune and illness.

Tribunal sporting activities

The Tribunal encourages a healthy lifestyle for its staff by making a financial contribution towards the registration of Tribunal teams in sporting competitions and activities. As in earlier years, members and staff in the Victorian Registry formed walking and running teams that participated in the Melbourne City Sports Corporate Cup series. The walking team placed first in their division in the Spring 2007 season and second in the Autumn 2008 season. The running team placed fourth in their division in the Spring 2007 season and first in the Autumn 2008 season.

Workplace diversity

The Tribunal recognises that people have different qualities, skills, qualifications and experience. Valuing and making proper and effective use of these differences can improve the workplace for individuals and enhance the overall performance of the Tribunal. These attitudes are reflected in the Tribunal's Workplace Diversity Plan which can be viewed on the Tribunal's website at www.aat.gov.au/CorporatePublications/WorkplaceDiversityPlan.htm. The plan has been reviewed and revised during 2007–08. The replacement plan is expected to be finalised shortly.

The Tribunal's Workplace Diversity Committee comprises staff representatives and a Tribunal member and is chaired by the Assistant Registrar. The committee met once during the reporting year. It continues to be involved in the Tribunal's Indigenous employment strategy. Minutes from meetings are made available to members and staff via the intranet.

Appendix 2 provides information on the number of staff members who have indicated that they fall within particular equal employment opportunity categories. This includes the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

Reconciliation Action Plan

The Tribunal has a Reconciliation Action Plan that aims to promote reconciliation through the engagement of Indigenous Australian employees and promoting awareness of the Tribunal's services among Indigenous Australians. The plan is available on the Tribunal's website (www.aat.gov.au).

Indigenous traineeship

The Tribunal's Indigenous Employment Strategy provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees with an opportunity to learn basic clerical job skills and to prepare for a career in the Australian Public Service or elsewhere. The Tribunal's second Indigenous trainee in the Queensland Registry completed his one-year clerical traineeship in June 2008.

The Tribunal also initiated its first traineeship for a school-aged Indigenous person in the Western Australian Registry. The traineeship commenced in 2007–08 with a Year 11 student attending school for four days per week with the fifth day spent in the Registry. The traineeship was discontinued but is planned to be re-instigated in the second half of 2008.

Workplace Harassment Contact Officer network

The Tribunal has nine Workplace Harassment Contact Officers across its Registries, including one Tribunal member. The trained officers operate as a national network. Tribunal members and staff are able to contact any Workplace Harassment Contact Officer within the network.

All members and staff of the Tribunal are entitled to a workplace free from intimidation and harassment. The Tribunal's commitment to the prevention and elimination of all forms of harassment in the workplace is supported by its Prevention and Elimination of Workplace

Harassment Policy. This policy sets out the Tribunal's expectations of Tribunal members, managers and staff in preventing and dealing with workplace harassment. In particular, the policy encourages managers and supervisors to be familiar with, and actively promote and support, the Tribunal's policy and strategies for dealing with harassment.

Commonwealth Disability Strategy

The Commonwealth Disability Strategy is designed to help agencies improve access to their services and facilities for people with disabilities. The Tribunal performs the roles of an employer and a provider. Appendix 9 provides a summary of the Tribunal's performance in relation to its role as a provider during 2007–08.

Disability Action Plan

The Tribunal's Disability Action Plan reflects and implements the Tribunal's commitment to the principles of workplace diversity and equality of access. It is based on the Commonwealth Disability Strategy. The plan sets out performance indicators in relation to various aspects of the Tribunal's role as an employer and provider. It is currently under review.

The plan can be viewed on the Tribunal's website at: www.aat.gov.au/CorporatePublications/DisabilityActionPlan.htm.

Human resource management

Workplace planning, staff retention and turnover

The Tribunal's training and development and performance management programs foster staff retention and professional development. The Tribunal's ongoing staffing complement was relatively stable during the reporting period.

Agency-wide and individual employment agreements

The Tribunal's collective workplace agreement, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Agency Agreement 2006–2009, continued to operate during 2007–08. The three-year collective workplace

agreement, which is nominally set to expire on 30 June 2009, offers 4.2 per cent annual salary increases. The agreement promotes a high standard of client service and the development of staff. It seeks to improve productivity and efficiency while reducing costs through specific in-house programs and initiatives, particularly those associated with the purpose-designed electronic case management system.

Information relating to the number of employees covered by the Agency Agreement and by Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) as at 30 June 2008 is set out in Table A2.3 in Appendix 2. That table also sets out the salary ranges for APS employees by classification level. Salary ranges for all staff members covered by AWAs are included in Table A2.3. Other conditions of service are similar or identical to those contained in the Agency Agreement.

During 2007–08, eight employees covered by AWAs received a performance bonus linked to a performance agreement: the Tribunal's only Senior Executive Service employee, three staff members at Executive Level 2 and four staff members at Executive Level 1. In addition, the Registrar of the Tribunal was eligible for a performance bonus under the Remuneration Tribunal's Principal Executive Office determination until the position was reclassified under the Holders of Full-Time Public Office determination with effect from 1 June 2008. As only a small number of employees received a performance bonus, the quantum of bonuses paid at each classification level is not published for privacy reasons. The total value of bonuses paid by the Tribunal for the 2007–08 year was \$80,565.67.

The Tribunal does not have a performance pay or bonus system for employees covered only by the Agency Agreement.

Senior Executive Service Officer remuneration

The Tribunal has only one Senior Executive Service position: the Assistant Registrar. Remuneration for that position is based on comparisons with the remuneration for staff in

similar Australian Government agencies. The remuneration package allows the occupant to cash out certain limited items in accordance with common Australian Government practice.

Performance Management Program

All Tribunal staff members have performance agreements in accordance with the Tribunal's Performance Management Program.

Depending on performance during the appraisal period, staff members are able to advance through the salary pay scale up to the maximum of the salary range for the relevant position. The program is linked to the Agency Agreement.

Appraisals were completed by 30 June 2008 for all staff members except those who were on leave at the appraisal time or where approval was given for extensions. Staff members also have individual development plans linked to their performance agreements which identify training and development needs.

Non-salary benefits

Tribunal staff members were provided with the following non-salary benefits under the Agency Agreement:

- two days of paid leave between Christmas Day and New Year's Day during which the Tribunal operates a skeleton staff to maintain basic registry functions;
- two additional weeks of paid maternity/parenting leave;
- ability to participate in a Transport Loans Scheme;
- health and well-being benefits such as influenza vaccinations; and
- study assistance.

Ongoing staff members are eligible to apply for study assistance which can include limited time off work to attend lectures, tutorials and examinations and may include full or partial reimbursement of fees and costs. During 2007–08, 17 staff members were accredited as approved students under the Tribunal's Studies Assistance Scheme. Most approvals related either to

undergraduate or postgraduate studies in law. Other approved courses included accounting, education, business, management, public administration and policy and workplace training. The cost of reimbursing study fees and charges was \$83,415. Approximately 1,351 study hours were approved for all purposes, such as attendance at lectures and tutorials, study leave and exam leave.

Salary packaging

Salary packaging is available to Tribunal members and staff pursuant to two policies covering different products: one policy is administered externally by the commercial firm McMillan Shakespeare and the other is administered internally by the Human Resources Section. During the reporting year, 61 employees took up the opportunity to access salary packaging arrangements in relation to superannuation (54), laptop computers (6) and motor vehicles (2).

Ethical standards

Tribunal staff members are required to act in accordance with the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct. The Tribunal employs a range of means to ensure that staff members are aware of, understand and apply them.

The Australian Public Service Values, Code of Conduct and explanatory materials are available to staff on the intranet. Recruitment guidelines and induction materials include information on them. A number of staff attended specific training during the reporting period in relation to the content and application of the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct.

OUR ORGANISATION

The Tribunal's goal in relation to the organisation is:

To be an organisation with systems and processes that maximise effective and efficient use of Tribunal resources.

This section of the report describes the activities undertaken by the Tribunal during 2007–08 that were directed to meeting this goal. It also provides more general information on the Tribunal's administration and governance.

Finance and property

Finance and property issues are the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer, the Finance Section and the Manager, Property, Services and Business.

Financial management

The Tribunal's audited financial statements for 2007–08 appear from page 55.

The 2007–08 financial year was a year of consolidation. The Tribunal's financial performance was just under budget due mainly to the deferral of some accommodation and information technology projects. A slight decrease in the number of applications received contributed to a lower than expected increase in salary costs relating to both members and staff. Supplier costs remained relatively stable for this financial year.

Property

The Tribunal operates from commercial premises in Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. In Brisbane and Hobart, the Tribunal occupies premises in the Commonwealth Law Courts buildings.

A minor refurbishment of the Registry in Melbourne was completed during 2007–08 and some minor issues were addressed in the Canberra premises. Planning for a minor refurbishment in Adelaide was completed during the reporting period and the refurbishments will be carried out in 2008–09.

Purchasing

The Tribunal observes the core principles of the *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines* and relevant best practice guidelines in relation to its purchasing activities. The Tribunal's Chief Executive Instructions are

reviewed to ensure that they conform to the current procurement guidelines. They are a valuable tool for staff with purchasing duties and have been used as a model by several other agencies.

For major purchases or contracts, the Tribunal uses competitive procurement processes to ensure value for money as well as proper and effective competition. Open tender processes are employed unless the circumstances indicate that a select tender would be appropriate. In accordance with the Tribunal's purchasing guidelines, at least three quotes are ordinarily obtained for goods or services that do not involve major purchases or contracts.

Consultants

The Tribunal employs consultants when the required skills are not available within the Tribunal or where the capacity to undertake the work in a specialist area is not available. Consultants are engaged using the procurement methods specified in the Chief Executive Instructions for the purchasing of services. Open tender, select tender or direct sourcing is used depending on the circumstances, timelines and the identified need for a consultant.

During 2007–08, three new consultancy contracts were entered into involving total actual expenditure of \$129,500 (inclusive of GST). In addition, seven ongoing consultancy contracts were active during 2007–08, involving total actual expenditure of \$69,514 (inclusive of GST). Table 5.1 sets out the Tribunal's total actual expenditure on all consultancies in the three most recent reporting years.

Table 5.1 Summary of total actual expenditure on consultancy contracts in the three most recent reporting years (inclusive of GST)

Year	Total actual expenditure (incl GST)
2005–06	\$155,093
2006–07	\$232,662
2007–08	\$199,014

Appendix 10 provides details in relation to each new consultancy let by the Tribunal during 2007–08 for which the total contract value (inclusive of GST) is \$10,000 or more. Appendix 10 also sets out the number and aggregate value of consultancies valued at \$10,000 or more for the three most recent reporting years.

Reporting on purchases

All purchases were gazetted as required. No contracts in excess of \$10,000 (inclusive of GST) or standing offers were exempted from being published on the AusTender website on the basis that they would disclose exempt matters under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Overview details of all contracts of \$100,000 or more current in any one calendar year are available through the Tribunal's website in accordance with the Senate order relating to agency contracts. No contracts were let during 2007–08 that did not provide for the Auditor-General to have access to the contractor's premises.

Information on expenditure on contracts and consultancies is also available on the AusTender website at www.tenders.gov.au.

Risk management

Audit and fraud control

The Tribunal's Audit Committee meets periodically to oversee the audit policy and plans for the forthcoming year. Its responsibilities include providing advice to the Registrar on a range of matters, such as the financial statements and fraud risk assessment, as well as commissioning internal audits on operational activities.

Each year, the Tribunal's independent internal auditor reviews the operations at most risk, and at most common risk, and undertakes audit activities related to these operations. During the reporting year, the internal auditor undertook audits of the Queensland, South Australian and Western Australian Registries. Areas scrutinised included assets, attendance records and payroll, bank accounts, hospitality, payments and

receipting, purchasing and security. Audits of Principal Registry finance and human resources operations are also undertaken each year. No major risks were identified as a result of the audits.

The Audit Committee has implemented sufficient processes to enable the Registrar to complete the Certificate of Compliance for the 2007–08 year.

The Registrar certifies that the Tribunal has prepared risk assessments and fraud control plans and has in place procedures that provide for fraud prevention, detection, investigation, reporting and data collection in compliance with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines. These plans were reviewed and updated in 2007–08.

Insurance

The Tribunal is insured through Comcover. In general terms, the Tribunal has a low risk of insurance exposure and a limited likelihood of major disruption to its services. However, cover is provided should that occur. In line with a general trend in the industry, the insurance premium decreased again in 2007–08.

Risk management assessment

The Tribunal has completed a risk assessment review examining all business risks that may impact on the Tribunal's national operations. The review covered registry operations, public interaction and information systems and links with the fraud control plan. These assessments will provide the basis for a comprehensive review of the Tribunal's Business Continuity Plan.

Security

The Tribunal's office areas are access-controlled. Duress alarms are installed in conference and hearing rooms and at registry counters to protect Tribunal members and staff in the event of an incident. The Tribunal has a fee-for-service agreement with Chubb Security Pty Limited to provide additional security services for Tribunal ADR processes and hearings as required. During the year, security services were arranged on several occasions as a precautionary measure.

The Tribunal has arrangements in place with the Family Court and the Federal Court to use their court rooms and security arrangements for hearings that involve a security risk. Court rooms were used on several occasions during the year for this purpose without incident.

The Australian Federal Police undertakes security vetting of staff whose duties require a security clearance in compliance with the *Australian Government Protective Security Manual*.

T4 Protective Security completed a review of the Tribunal's physical security arrangements in 2006–07 to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to protect Tribunal members, staff, the public and Australian Government records and assets from attack or unwanted intervention. Implementation of the recommendations of the review commenced in 2007–08 and will continue in 2008–09.

Information Technology

The IT Section developed and managed several significant projects during the year.

TRACS

The overall performance of the Tribunal's case management system, known as TRACS (Tribunal Record and Case System), has improved over the last year. Significant enhancements were implemented by the IT Section in consultation with the licensee of the system, Strategic Business Consulting Pty Limited (SBC). Software enhancements were made to improve the speed of the system and to enable users to list a hearing over multiple days and with multiple members, an extremely useful function.

The IT Section undertook considerable work with SBC and Tribunal users during 2007–08 to develop TRACS's reporting capacity. The Tribunal was also able to close down its previous mainframe-based case management system (AATCAMS) in October 2007 following the successful migration of all historical data to TRACS.

Refresher training courses on using TRACS were conducted with staff in all Registries. The IT Section also introduced the WebEx web conferencing tool to enable interactive online meetings with Super Users in local Registries. This allows for ease of communication about program developments.

Infrastructure and network tenders

The IT Section is in the process of assessing tenders for the supply and implementation of a new generation of servers and a new wide area network connecting the Registries. It is also assessing submissions for the Tribunal's telephony, videoconferencing, remote access, and internet and gateway/firewall services.

Security compliance

This year, a remote-access system was implemented to enable Tribunal personnel to work safely from home. Investigations were also undertaken to find a way to securely integrate email-via-mobile phone as part of the network. The Tribunal is continuing to work to enhance system security in line with government requirements.

Information technology strategic alliances

The Tribunal's Manager of Information Technology, Paul Hoffmans, is a member of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) Forum convened by the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO). At the Forum held in August 2007, Mr Hoffmans met with the CIO of AGIMO and others to discuss a number of subjects, including identity management, security, tenders and contracts, and procurement guidelines. Involvement with the CIO Forum has enabled the IT Section to benefit from a cooperative relationship with other agencies.

A number of other courts and tribunals, including the New South Wales Workers Compensation Commission, use electronic case management systems that are similar to TRACS. The IT Section values the opportunity to liaise with these agencies to discuss and accelerate the development of the system.

Library and information services

Library Committee

The Library Committee met twice during the reporting year in October 2007 and June 2008. Members of the acquisitions sub-committee liaised regularly in relation to the purchase of additional hard-copy and online resources.

Library network

The Tribunal's library network provides library and information services to Tribunal members and staff in all Registries throughout Australia. The network is comprised of the Principal Registry library in Brisbane and District Registry libraries in Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Libraries are staffed by professional librarians who organise and manage the collection and assist members and staff with their information needs.

The library network provides access to a number of online legal resources and online reference resources which are available through the Tribunal intranet. The Electronic Publishing Officer, also a librarian located in Principal Registry library, manages the content of the Tribunal's internet and intranet.

Achievements of the library network in the reporting year included:

- acquiring, cataloguing and distributing new paper and electronic materials in response to Library Committee recommendations for the collection;
- continuing a project to provide electronic copies of all Tribunal decisions to the AustLII website;
- maintaining the Tribunal's intranet and internet sites; and
- ongoing management of the process of electronic delivery of Tribunal decisions to publishers, government departments and agencies and other interested parties.

Policy and Research Section

The Policy and Research Section provides the President, Registrar and Assistant Registrar with advice and assistance in relation to legal and policy issues affecting

the Tribunal. It also provides information and assistance to Tribunal members and staff in relation to legislative changes, case law developments and practice and procedure issues. The primary responsibilities of the section are:

- undertaking research and preparing advice, correspondence and papers relating to matters affecting the Tribunal;
- monitoring appeals from Tribunal decisions;
- producing and maintaining resource materials, including the Tribunal's jurisdiction list and procedure manuals;
- coordinating reporting on Tribunal performance, including producing statistical information on the Tribunal's workload;
- managing projects and providing support to Tribunal committees; and
- assisting with the delivery of training for Tribunal staff.

Key achievements for the reporting year included:

- coordinating the preparation and distribution of the Guide to the Social Security Jurisdiction;
- coordinating the review of the Tribunal's communication products;
- assisting with the conduct of the user survey;
- assisting with the ongoing development of the functionality and reporting capacity of the Tribunal's electronic case management system, TRACS;
- providing training to staff on practice and procedure developments;
- coordinating the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Mooting Competition.

The section comprises five staff: the Manager, the Senior Legal and Policy Officer, two Legal and Policy Officers and the Communications Project Officer.



Policy and Research Section: Chantal Bostock; Chris Matthies; Jason Cabarrús; Keelyann Thomson.
Absent: Rocelle Ago.

