



Administrative
Appeals Tribunal

Corporate Plan

2019–20

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I, as the accountable authority of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, present the 2019–20 Administrative Appeals Tribunal corporate plan, which covers the period of 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2023, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.



Sian Leathem
Registrar
Administrative Appeals Tribunal
27 August 2019

Purpose

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) provides independent merits review of a wide range of administrative decisions made under the laws of the Commonwealth of Australia and of Norfolk Island. The Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA), a separate office within the AAT, provides merits review of certain visa decisions.

Merits review of an administrative decision involves considering afresh the facts, law and policy relating to that decision. We decide what is the correct or preferable decision based on the material before us and may affirm, vary, set aside or remit the decision under review.

The AAT must pursue the objective of providing a mechanism of review of administrative decisions that:

- is accessible
- is fair, just, economical, informal and quick
- is proportionate to the importance and complexity of the matter, and
- promotes public trust and confidence in the decision-making of the Tribunal.¹

The IAA must pursue the objective of providing a mechanism of review that is efficient, quick and free of bias.²

The AAT and IAA provide administrative justice for individuals and organisations by reviewing decisions in accordance with the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975* and the *Migration Act 1958* and, more broadly, contribute to improving the quality of government decision-making.

Environment

Context

The AAT is the principal tribunal undertaking merits review of administrative decisions made by Australian Government ministers, departments and agencies and, in limited circumstances, decisions made by state government and non-government bodies.

The AAT has jurisdiction to review decisions made under more than 400 separate Acts and legislative instruments. Our work is organised in the following divisions:

- Freedom of Information Division
- General Division
- Migration & Refugee Division
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Division
- Security Division
- Small Business Taxation Division
- Social Services & Child Support Division
- Taxation & Commercial Division, and
- Veterans' Appeals Division.

The IAA, a separate office within the Migration & Refugee Division, conducts fast track reviews of decisions to refuse to grant certain persons a protection (refugee) visa.

¹ Section 2A of the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*.

² Section 473FA(1) of the *Migration Act 1958*.

In undertaking our activities, the AAT engages with a diverse range of:

- individuals, businesses and other organisations who seek review of decisions or are otherwise parties to a review
- agencies, organisations and other persons whose decisions we review, and
- persons and organisations who represent or assist parties involved in reviews.

Applicants and other users are able to access the AAT through registries in each of the state capital cities and in the Australian Capital Territory, and through arrangements for the provision of registry services on Norfolk Island. We provide services to users in the Northern Territory primarily from our Adelaide Registry.

The creation of a fully integrated AAT following amalgamation of the AAT with the Migration Review Tribunal (MRT), Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) and Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT) on 1 July 2015 continues to be a strategic objective. While significant progress has been made, work will continue in 2019–20 and the forward years.

Environmental factors

A range of factors in our operational environment affect our activities and performance. The most significant factors are those that impact on our caseload and our ability to deal with it effectively and efficiently. Key factors are discussed below.

Size and composition of the workload

The AAT is a demand-led organisation. A complex range of factors determines the types and volume of applications that are made to us. They include:

- Government policy decisions that set the AAT's jurisdiction to review administrative decisions
- the volume of primary decision-making activity which is driven by the number of applications, claims or requests made requiring a decision as well as decision-making priorities and strategies adopted by organisations whose decisions we review such as compliance action or the application of additional resources to address backlogs
- the availability of mechanisms of internal review or review by another body before an application can be made to the AAT, and
- the multifaceted set of considerations that inform whether a person or organisation will apply for a review.

The AAT's workload has increased significantly in recent years. The number of lodgements in 2017–18 (58,780) and 2018–19 (60,595) were respectively 42 per cent and 46 per cent higher than in 2015–16 (41,432). Applications have been increasing particularly in the NDIS Division and the Social Services & Child Support Division. However, the largest increase has occurred in the Migration & Refugee Division with the number of applications lodged in 2017–18 (37,933) and 2018–19 (36,172) approximately double the number lodged in 2015–16 (18,929). The AAT appears to be facing a fundamental shift in the volume and composition of our caseload rather than a temporary spike in applications, particularly in the Migration & Refugee Division.

The IAA is also demand-led. The *Migration Act 1958* and instruments made by the Minister determine the class of persons who are fast track applicants. When a decision is made to refuse to grant a protection visa to a fast track applicant, the case is referred to the IAA automatically. The IAA's workload is determined by the number of fast track applicants and the rate of referral of these matters to the IAA.

The AAT and IAA seek to anticipate and plan for likely changes in the number of applications and referrals we receive, including by liaising with decision-making organisations. Challenges arise in responding to changes in caseload, however, due to constraints in our ability to easily adjust the AAT's member, staffing and financial resources.

Membership and staffing

The AAT consists of the President and other members who may be appointed as Deputy Presidents, Senior Members and Members. The Registrar and staff employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* assist the AAT to carry out the AAT's functions.

The AAT's members undertake reviews, principally conducting hearings and making decisions. They are statutory office holders appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Government for terms of up to seven years. We regularly review our membership needs and provide advice to Government about those needs in accordance with an agreed protocol, but decisions relating to member appointments, including the number, level and location, are ultimately a matter for Government. Decisions relating to member appointments directly impact on our ability to deliver our services, particularly meeting targets for the number of finalised reviews and timeliness standards.

The AAT's staff perform a range of functions, primarily to support the conduct of reviews. They process applications and referrals, liaise with parties and representatives about their cases, undertake alternative dispute resolution and other early case assessment activities, provide support to the members and, in the IAA, undertake the reviews. Other staff perform a range of corporate support services for the organisation as a whole. The AAT is subject to an Average Staffing Level cap which is largely informed by historical caseload levels.

The number of members and staff has not increased in line with our significantly higher workload. In particular, at the current membership levels, we are unable to keep pace with the rate of incoming applications.

Funding

The funding arrangements for the AAT and IAA comprise a single, annual appropriation with an adjustable component which responds to variations in the number of cases finalised in the Migration & Refugee Division.

The arrangements for the AAT are largely based on the funding models that were in place in the three amalgamating tribunals prior to amalgamation. These legacy arrangements are no longer in step with the AAT's changed operating environment, particularly the higher volume of applications. A more flexible funding model which allows the AAT to respond to fluctuations in our workload would better support the AAT to achieve our purpose. The IAA is funded through a separate funding agreement that is based on the projected number of referrals from the Department of Home Affairs.

Legislative framework for the conduct of reviews

In general, the procedures that applied to the conduct of reviews in the AAT, MRT, RRT and SSAT were preserved in the amalgamated AAT. Some of these are embedded in the legislation that governs the operations of the AAT's divisions. While the AAT has been trialing different approaches to seek to improve the review process within the existing framework, some of the procedural differences set out in legislation limit the potential for the AAT to manage cases in the most effective, efficient and proportionate manner, particularly in the context of our changed operating environment.

For example, the AAT's Migration & Refugee Division has more limited flexibility in the conduct of reviews due to some of the codified procedural requirements set out in the *Migration Act 1958*. The lack of any powers under that Act for the AAT to conduct conferences and directions hearings, to give enforceable directions, and to dismiss applications for failure to comply with a direction also hampers our ability to manage cases effectively in that division.

The AAT has been working with the Attorney-General's Department and other relevant agencies to explore options for further legislative harmonisation.

Stakeholders

The AAT's stakeholder environment is complex due to the very broad range of decisions we can review which span Australian Government areas of responsibility. The range of users and other stakeholders with an interest in the work of the AAT is extensive and there is a significant degree of interest in relation to the AAT's decisions and operations, including by the Parliament, the media and the public. Our ability to engage effectively with our users and other stakeholders is important in developing and delivering high-quality services for our users as well as enhancing trust and confidence in the AAT's and IAA's processes and decisions.

Expectations in relation to service delivery and technological change

Technological advances are continuing to transform the way in which services are delivered and work is performed in society. Users of the AAT have changing expectations in relation to how they want to be able to interact with us as do our members and staff in relation to how they want to be able to work. Consistent with whole-of-government requirements, we want to use technology to provide improved user-centred services and allow members and staff to work more effectively and efficiently. Having inherited a range of legacy systems from the amalgamating tribunals and dealing with a wide range of users, there are challenges in developing and funding an integrated suite of digital services that will meet the needs of all stakeholders.

Performance

This section describes what the AAT plans to do and how success will be measured. The AAT's Annual Performance Statement for 2019–20, which will be included in our 2019–20 Annual Report, will report on the achievement of these goals.

What will the AAT do?

The AAT is a single-outcome and single-program entity as set out in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

Outcome 1: Provide correct or preferable decisions through a mechanism of independent review of administrative decisions that is accessible, fair, just, economical, informal, quick and proportionate.

Program 1.1: The AAT and IAA provide administrative justice and contribute to improving the quality of government decision-making by reviewing administrative decisions in accordance with the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975* and the *Migration Act 1958*.

The financial and human resources of the AAT and IAA are dedicated to delivering this outcome and program.

How will the AAT measure success?³

Performance measure 1: Number of applications and referrals finalised											
Description:	The number of AAT applications and IAA referrals finalised each financial year.										
When:	Measurement occurs annually after the end of the financial year in relation to that financial year.										
Method:	Quantitative data measurement.										
Rationale:	<p>This measure is an indicator of the scale of activity undertaken by the AAT and IAA.</p> <p>The AAT component of the targets are estimates based on the past year's performance, information relating to the financial and human resources that will be available and a modest anticipated increase in finalisations resulting from the introduction of greater efficiencies.</p> <p>The IAA component of the targets are estimates based on expected referral rates and available financial and human resources. Targets for 2021–22 and 2022–23 do not include any IAA finalisations as funding for the IAA currently expires in 2020–21.</p> <p>The ability of the AAT and IAA to meet or exceed our performance target in any given year is significantly dependent on the volume of applications or referrals and the resources, particularly the number of members, reviewers and other staff, available to deal with applications during that period.</p>										
Target:	<p>The estimated number of finalisations for the next four financial years, as set out in the Portfolio Budget Statement for the AAT is as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2019–20</th> <th>2020–21</th> <th>2021–22</th> <th>2022–23</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number of applications finalised</td> <td>48,756</td> <td>46,536</td> <td>46,981</td> <td>47,451</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	Number of applications finalised	48,756	46,536	46,981	47,451
	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23							
Number of applications finalised	48,756	46,536	46,981	47,451							
Previous results:	2015–16: 38,146 (target of 40,669); 2016–17: 42,224 (target of 50,670); 2017–18: 40,040 (target of 44,410); 2018–19: 44,413 (target of 45,600)										

Performance measure 2: Proportion of applications and referrals finalised within a time standard	
Description:	The proportion of applications and referrals finalised within 12 months of lodgement or receipt each financial year.
When:	Measurement occurs annually after the end of the financial year in relation to applications finalised in that financial year.

³ Performance measures 1, 2, 3 and 5 in this year's corporate plan cover the work both of the AAT and, for the first time, the IAA. The results for previous years reported for each of these measures relates only to the AAT.

Performance measure 2: Proportion of applications and referrals finalised within a time standard	
Method:	Quantitative data measurement.
Rationale:	<p>This measure is an indicator of the extent to which the AAT and IAA are providing a mechanism of review that is quick.</p> <p>The AAT and IAA review a wide range of decisions. The time taken to finalise cases varies for different types of cases based on a range of factors, including the nature and complexity of the cases, differences in the procedures that apply to the review of decisions, the priority given to certain types of cases and the overall level of resources available to deal with applications and referrals.</p> <p>The 75% target has been derived taking into account these variations and reflects a suitable benchmark for the AAT and IAA as a whole.</p>
Target:	In each financial year, 75% of applications are finalised within 12 months of lodgement.
Previous results:	2015–16: 80%; 2016–17: 82%; 2017–18: 77%; 2018–19: 66%

Performance measure 3: Number of decisions published	
Description:	The number of AAT and IAA decisions made during the financial year that are published.
When:	Measurement occurs annually after the end of the financial year in relation to that financial year.
Method:	Quantitative data measurement.
Rationale:	<p>This measure is an indicator relating to the AAT and IAA providing mechanisms of review that are accessible and promote public trust and confidence in decision-making by making information available about our decisions.</p> <p>The AAT and IAA are authorised to publish our decisions and the reasons for them, subject to the requirement not to publish information the disclosure of which is prohibited or restricted by legislation or by an order of the Tribunal.</p> <p>In accordance with our decisions publication policy, the AAT generally publishes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – all written decisions made in the Freedom of Information, General, NDIS, Security, Small Business Taxation, Taxation & Commercial, and Veterans' Appeals Divisions – all written decisions made in certain types of cases in the Migration & Refugee Division and proportions of written decisions made in cases in higher-volume areas of the Division's jurisdiction, and – a proportion of written decisions made in child support cases in the Social Services & Child Support Division. <p>The IAA publishes a representative sample of decisions.</p> <p>The target represents the estimated minimum number of written decisions the AAT and IAA expect to publish each financial year.</p>

Performance measure 3: Number of decisions published	
Target:	At least 5,000 decisions made in each financial year.
Previous results:	2015–16: 3,022; 2016–17: 2,506; 2017–18: 4,918 (target of 4,000); 2018–19: 5,905 (target of 5,000)

Performance measure 4: AAT user experience rating	
Description:	The average positive ratings derived from the results of a survey of parties and representatives about their experience at the AAT.
When:	Measurement occurs annually after the completion of the survey conducted during that financial year.
Method:	Quantitative data measurement. Data is collected using independently administered online surveys, invitations for which are sent to all parties and representatives involved in a case finalised within a defined period for whom the AAT has an email address or mobile telephone number. The survey asks users to rate the quality of their experience of various aspects of the review process from lodgement to finalisation and their perceptions of the process overall. The user experience rating is calculated by computing the average positive ratings (i.e. the average of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' ratings) given in responses to questions relating to the accessibility, fairness, informality and timeliness of the AAT's mechanism of review.
Rationale:	This measure is an indicator of the extent to which the AAT is providing a mechanism of review that is accessible, fair, informal and quick. Taking the results of the survey conducted in 2017–18 as a baseline while also striving for further improvement, an average positive rating of at least 70% is considered an appropriate target for the AAT.
Target:	The user experience rating is at least 70% in each financial year.
Previous results:	2017–18: 70%; 2018–19: 73%

Performance measure 5: Proportion of appeals against decisions allowed by the courts	
Description:	The number of appeals against AAT and IAA decisions allowed by the courts as a proportion of all AAT and IAA decisions that could have been appealed to the courts.
When:	Measurement occurs annually after the end of the financial year in relation to appeals allowed in that financial year against AAT and IAA decisions that could have been appealed to the courts made in the previous financial year.
Method:	Quantitative data measurement. The number of appeals allowed in the financial year is divided by the number of AAT and IAA decisions that could have been appealed to the courts made in the previous financial year.

Performance measure 5: Proportion of appeals against decisions allowed by the courts

Rationale:	<p>This measure is an indicator of the extent to which the AAT and IAA are providing mechanisms of review that are fair and just and that promote public trust and confidence in decision-making.</p> <p>The AAT and IAA must make the correct or preferable decision when reviewing a decision. The AAT's decisions may be appealed to the courts and an appeal may be allowed if the AAT has made an error of law in relation to how the review was conducted or in reaching the decision.</p> <p>This measure uses the total number of AAT and IAA decisions that could have been appealed to the courts as the base for the target as only a proportion of those decisions are appealed. The measure looks at the number of appeals that were allowed by the courts in the most recent financial year against the number of appealable decisions made by the AAT and IAA in the previous year. For appeals lodged in relation to decisions made in a particular year, the largest proportion is finalised in the following year.</p> <p>A target of less than 5% reflects that the proportion of AAT and IAA decisions set aside for legal error should be low.</p>
Target:	<p>In each financial year, the number of appeals allowed is less than 5% of all AAT and IAA decisions made in the previous year that could have been appealed.</p>
Previous results:	<p>2015–16: 3.3%; 2016–17: 3.0%; 2017–18: 3.1%; 2018–19: 2.3%</p>

Capability

This section describes the key strategies and plans the AAT will use to achieve our purpose. They are based on the following strategic priorities:

- creating an integrated, national Tribunal
- improving how we work and maximising our use of technology
- engaging with stakeholders and building public trust and confidence, and
- building capacity and making best use of our resources.

Governance and structure

The AAT continues to face a high level of change complexity in 2019–20 and the forward years in:

- pursuing the further harmonisation and integration of our operations
- managing the significant increase in our workload, and
- delivering our digital transformation program.

To address these challenges effectively, we must have an operating model that features:

- sound governance arrangements with clear responsibilities and accountabilities
- an organisational structure that effectively supports our operations
- well-aligned organisational priorities, planning and delivery.

The review of the amalgamated AAT, required by the *Tribunals Amalgamation Act 2015* and carried out by the Hon Ian Callinan AC in 2018–19, considered elements of our existing operating model. We also reviewed how we are set up to deliver our purposes and our strategic priorities. In 2019–20, we will finalise and implement agreed changes to our governance arrangements and organisational structure, particularly for corporate and other support services, to set the foundation for the next phases of building a truly amalgamated AAT.

Resourcing

Given the significant and sustained increase in our workload and limitations arising from our legacy funding arrangements, the AAT will work with the Government in 2019–20 to seek to ensure the AAT and IAA have the people and financial resources to undertake our work and meet our statutory objectives. This will include:

- determining the appropriate number of members and staff required to deal with our backlog and incoming work
- implementing revised arrangements agreed with the Attorney-General for the appointment and reappointment of members
- seeking changes to our Average Staffing Level cap to ensure we can engage the staff that are needed, and
- pursuing and implementing revised funding arrangements.

We are mindful that the request for additional resourcing must be supported by the AAT and IAA identifying and implementing ongoing changes to our operations that improve efficiency. We must manage the increased workload while continuing to deliver high-quality reviews in accordance with our statutory objectives at a reasonable cost. The key elements of our efforts in this regard follow.

Harmonisation of procedures and operations

The harmonisation of the AAT's procedures and operations across divisions and locations, where practicable, remains a key priority in 2019–20 and future years, including the harmonisation of member working arrangements. While some procedures and operational arrangements will necessarily vary for the effective and efficient review of the many different types of decisions within our jurisdiction, harmonising areas of difference that do not serve a functional purpose will have a number of benefits, including:

- enhancing access to justice and consistency of service for users of the AAT
- enabling us to make the most effective use of our members and staff across divisions leading to improvements in efficiency and output, and
- reducing the complexity and associated costs of developing processes and systems to support the review process.

In addition to maintaining efforts to harmonise non-legislative areas of difference, the AAT will continue to engage with the Attorney-General's Department and other agencies to seek to progress proposals for legislative changes that reduce areas of procedural inconsistency between our divisions and also enhance our flexibility to manage cases in the most effective and proportionate manner. The review of the amalgamated AAT made a number of recommendations that are supportive of these changes. These include the ability for all of the AAT's divisions to use conferencing processes, hold directions hearings and make enforceable directions.

Caseload management strategies

The AAT will maintain our focus in 2019–20 and the forward years on developing national practice areas for suitable categories of cases as well as implementing enhanced case management strategies to deal more effectively, efficiently and consistently with different caseloads within the current and any changed legislative framework. Examples of strategies include:

- triaging cases to identify the most appropriate case pathway and any gaps in the information available to the AAT
- using outreach processes to provide better information to parties about the review process, including what will occur and the information they may need
- using smart forms to gather relevant information, and
- allocating batches of similar cases to members to facilitate faster decision-making.

With our increased caseload, we will continue to explore opportunities, including using staff as far as appropriate, to resolve cases at the earliest opportunity and ensure cases are well-prepared for hearing so that members are able to make the most effective use of their time when conducting hearings and to make decisions.

Improvement of registry services

The AAT has instituted a program of work to implement changes to our registries over time that will improve the quality and consistency of the service we provide to our users, support efficient case management and provide better support to members. In 2019–20, we will:

- ensure all registries are capable of dealing with the full range of applications made to the AAT
- implement new structures in the Migration & Refugee Division to support the implementation of enhanced case management strategies and the provision of enhanced support to members
- work on establishing a national contact centre that will provide the first level of procedural information and assistance for users across a range of channels.

In the forward years, our registry transformation program will continue to focus on the provision of effective support to the divisions, building the capacity of staff to undertake work across divisions supported by improved induction, access to procedural information and training programs and responding to changing needs, particularly with the introduction of improved digital services .

Access to our services

The AAT and IAA strive to provide a mechanism of review that is accessible for the wide range of users and potential users of our services, including Indigenous Australians, people from other diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, people with disability and people from regional and remote locations. We employ various measures to assist people to apply to the AAT and participate in the AAT and IAA review processes, particularly those representing themselves. In 2019–20 and the forward years, we will progress our identified priorities for making our services more accessible with areas of focus to include:

- engaging with stakeholders to better understand needs and barriers in relation to accessing review, particularly for Indigenous Australians and people with disability
- developing a revised interpreter policy and guideline for interpreters, and translating more information products into community languages
- establishing an ongoing presence in Darwin and reviewing our approach to how parties in regional and remote locations participate in case events

- improving information for self-represented parties, including fact sheets on the key issues that arise in different categories of cases and information about advice and assistance services, and
- learning and development for members and staff in relation to diversity and interacting with our diverse users.

ICT and data strategies

The AAT's information and technology strategies provide a roadmap for implementing a range of initiatives in 2019–20 and future years to deliver an improved digital operating environment for the Tribunal and our users. Key elements of the strategies include new online service and information exchange options for external users underpinned by integrated and unified internal case management tools, better systems for managing information and a modern, secure operating system and underlying infrastructure. Employing a user-centred design approach, new and enhanced online service options and modes of attendance will increase the convenience and accessibility of the AAT's services for our users. Improved internal systems will help our members and staff to work more effectively and efficiently to deliver our services.

In 2019–20, we will commence work on the implementation of a single case management solution for the Tribunal as well as a data strategy to ensure we make the most effective use of our information for strategic and operational decisions.

Stakeholder engagement

We are committed to engaging with the broad range of external stakeholders who use our services or have an interest in our work in order to:

- help users understand our services, requirements and priorities
- obtain feedback on and improve our services
- develop cooperative relationships that facilitate the delivery of our services
- learn about, and plan for, developments that may affect the AAT and the IAA, and
- promote public trust and confidence in the AAT and IAA.

In 2019–20 and the forward years, we will maintain our efforts to engage stakeholders in a purposeful and coordinated way. This will include using a variety of mechanisms to seek feedback from users about their experiences at the Tribunal as well as ensuring we have effective liaison arrangements in place both nationally for our key areas of jurisdiction and locally to address relevant issues. In 2019–20, a particular focus will be establishing regular and consistent engagement arrangements for our National Disability Insurance Scheme Division. We will also maintain our public affairs strategy which seeks to improve the wider community's understanding of what we do and the decisions the Tribunal makes.

Workforce capability

Our people are fundamental to the delivery of high-quality merits review. Ensuring our people have the required capabilities and can develop and apply their knowledge and skills to deliver the AAT's services effectively and efficiently is a high priority.

A focus for 2019–20 is to revise our Member Professional Development Program to better support the development of our members' capabilities, especially our newly appointed members. We will also support staff to develop their expertise and experience across the range of review types conducted within the AAT and to undertake revised roles. We will also engage with and develop members and staff as technological changes alter the type of work that is undertaken and how it is managed.

The AAT will continue to implement learning and development programs based on identified training needs to support enhanced workforce capability. We will work on developing our shared vision and culture, including through improved internal communication and engagement with members and staff.

Risk oversight and management systems

The AAT is committed to managing risk effectively in accordance with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy and other relevant standards and guidelines. We have a range of arrangements in place to ensure that risks are identified, analysed, managed and reviewed with risk practices integrated into planning and business processes. Our key risk oversight and management systems include:

- an AAT Risk Management Framework supported by the AAT-wide Risk Register and risk awareness sessions
- regular monitoring of risk issues by the AAT's senior leaders
- reviews of risk management practices and issues by our Audit and Risk Committee
- a three-year internal audit plan and regular internal audit activity
- Accountable Authority Instructions issued by the Registrar
- fraud control plan and risk assessments
- security policies, procedures and reviews, and
- business continuity and disaster recovery plans.

A range of strategic and operational risks may affect the achievement of the AAT's purpose. Areas of risk relate to our:

- governance and compliance
- caseload management and decision-making
- people
- reputation
- resource management, and
- technology.

Some examples of key risks for the AAT and how we are mitigating those risks are outlined in the following table:

Risk	Key mitigation strategies
Failure to finalise as many applications as we are receiving results in a growing backlog, delay and user dissatisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage regularly with Government in relation to workload, member issues, staffing and funding arrangements • Liaise with agencies in relation to, and plan for, future workload changes • Review our ways of working and the tools we use to improve effectiveness and efficiency

Risk	Key mitigation strategies
<p>Failure to develop the knowledge and skills of members and staff in a changing environment leads to diminution of consistency and quality of service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake workforce development planning • Implement effective performance management frameworks and learning and development programs • Provide appropriate resources, tools and other supports for members and staff
<p>Failure to engage with stakeholders and the community undermines trust and confidence in the AAT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy • Build internal stakeholder engagement capability • Explain our role and operations to the community.
<p>Failure to implement user-centred digital service offerings and ways of working does not meet Australian Government and community expectations and impedes efficiencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the digital strategy using an agile approach • Engage with users to understand their needs in designing solutions • Build capability and capacity to deliver successful projects