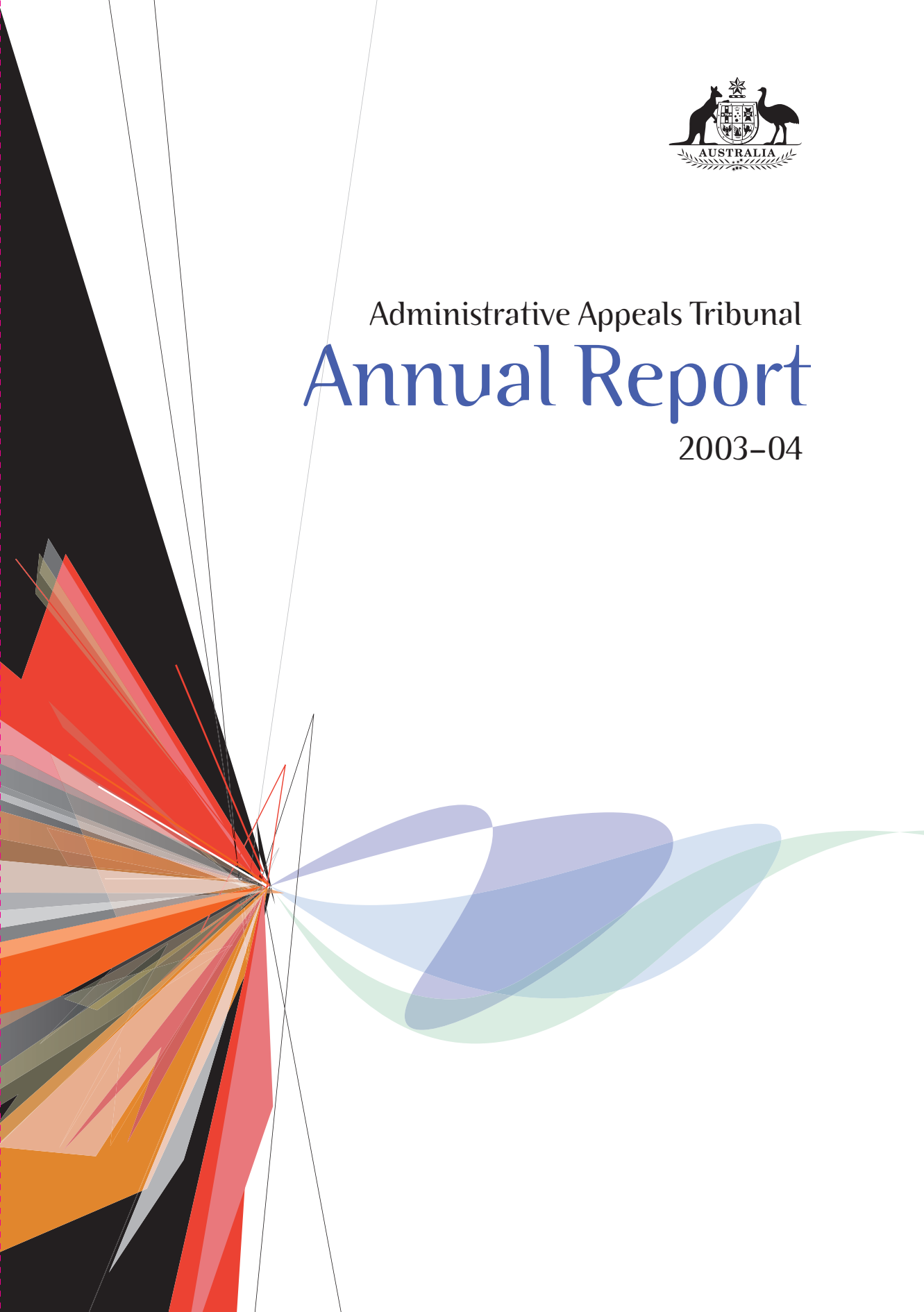




Administrative Appeals Tribunal
Annual Report
2003-04





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Administrative Appeals Tribunal

PRESIDENT'S CHAMBERS
The Hon Justice Garry Downes AM

20 September 2004

The Hon Philip Ruddock MP
Attorney-General of the
Commonwealth of Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

My dear Attorney-General,

In accordance with section 24R of the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*, I present to you the Annual Report of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal covering the Tribunal's operations for the year ended 30 June 2004.

yours faithfully,

GARRY DOWNES

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Reader's guide

The purpose of this annual report is to inform the Attorney-General, the Parliament, Tribunal users and the general public about the performance of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (the AAT) during the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004. In producing the report, the Tribunal has been mindful of this diverse range of readers.

In this year's report, the Tribunal has adopted a revised approach to the presentation of information on its operations. The Tribunal's Organisational Plan 2003–04, which appears at the end of Chapter 1, sets out key result areas, goals and strategies which are linked to the outcome specified in the Tribunal's Portfolio Agency Budget Statements. That outcome is:

to provide aggrieved persons and agencies with timely, fair and independent merits review of administrative decisions over which the Tribunal has jurisdiction.

This report provides information on the Tribunal's performance in relation to this outcome and each of the key result areas identified in the plan.

Other new features of this report include:

- profiles of the Tribunal's members
- more statistical information relating to the Tribunal's major jurisdictions – compensation, social security, taxation and veterans' affairs
- a compliance index.

Chapter 1: The year in review – comprises the President's overview and Registrar's report.

These two reports highlight significant issues relating to the Tribunal's performance during the reporting year, which are discussed in more detail throughout the report.

Chapter 2: Overview of the Tribunal – provides basic information about the Tribunal, including its role, functions and powers, organisational structure, people, dispute resolution process and accessibility.

Chapter 3: Workload and performance – provides information and commentary on the Tribunal's workload and performance results. This chapter includes information on financial performance, performance against internal time standards, complaints and external scrutiny.

Chapter 4: Our users and our partners – contains information on initiatives to improve the Tribunal's practices and procedures, access to the Tribunal and the Tribunal's liaison with its users. It also describes the Tribunal's contact and relationships with other external bodies in relation to issues concerning the Tribunal and its operations.

Chapter 5: Our people and our organisation – provides information on human resource management within the Tribunal and the administration of the Tribunal generally.

The audited financial statements of the Tribunal are set out after Chapter 5, commencing at page 63.

The appendices include profiles of the Tribunal's members, more detailed statistical information on the Tribunal's workload, changes to the Tribunal's jurisdiction, Tribunal decisions of interest, and freedom of information data. A complete list of appendices is provided in the table of contents.

The following tools may assist in finding information in this report – the table of contents at page iv, glossary at page 154, compliance index at page 160, and index to this report at page 163.

An electronic version of this annual report is available from the Tribunal's website, at www.aat.gov.au/CorporatePublications/AnnualReport.htm. Further information about the Tribunal is available from the Tribunal's homepage, at www.aat.gov.au.

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