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MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY



MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Management accountability is achieved with the support of the Corporate and Strategy section of the Institute. Corporate and Strategy provides a range of services to assist the Institute to meet its goals through developing and applying improved executive, financial, administrative, personnel and information technology policies and practices.

Corporate governance

On 1 July 2006, AIFS became an agency operating under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act) agency. The focus throughout 2007–08 has been the effective implementation and maintenance of high standards of corporate governance and accountability, with a continuing focus on FMA Act compliance.

As a result of machinery of government changes, a “Statement of Expectations” and “Statement of Intent” between the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and the AIFS Director were developed and signed in June 2008 (see boxed text, pp. 97–8).

In addition, the AIFS Director and Secretary of PM&C signed an MoU that enables the Institute to undertake a range of projects for the Department. A communication protocol has also been signed that facilitates the communication of information between AIFS and PM&C and enables the timely communication of high-quality advice to the Prime Minister from and regarding AIFS.

Senior executive members

Professor Alan Hayes is the Director of the Institute. He was appointed to a five-year term on 9 September 2004. Two Deputy Directors assist the Director in leading and managing the Institute.

Dr Matthew Gray is the Deputy Director (Research), and Ms Sue Tait is the Deputy Director (Corporate and Strategy). Each Deputy Director works with General Managers, who are responsible for nominated corporate and research outcomes that are reflected in the Institute’s Strategic Plan 2006–08 and Research Plan 2006–08, *Families Through Life: Diversity, Change and Context*.

Senior management committees

The Director has overall responsibility for the leadership and management of the Institute. A number of committees and groups are in place to support this function.

Internal management committees

Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) leads and coordinates all aspects of the strategic, research and corporate functions of the Institute. It comprises the Director and the two Deputy Directors.

Statement of Expectations

Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister to the Director

This statement outlines the expectations of the Australian Government of the Australian Institute of Family Studies and establishes the operating framework between the Australian Institute of Family Studies, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and me for 12 months from the date of endorsement. It is subject to review.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies should provide for my endorsement a Statement of Intent within one month of receipt of this Statement of Expectations. The Statement of Intent should state how the Australian Institute of Family Studies proposes to meet the expectations of the Australian Government as specified below.

I expect the Australian Institute of Family Studies to, in addition to undertaking its functions as set out in the *Family Law Act 1975*, to:

1. undertake impartial, policy relevant research on family-related issues that is of the highest standard and of value to key stakeholders from its contract undertakings and other activities; and act as a source of expertise in providing research-based information to a range of portfolios across Australian Government;
2. work collaboratively with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, in particular, the Office of Work and Family, so that its research informs the policy work of the Office of Work and Family to make informed decisions on work and family issues;
3. respond to requests from the Prime Minister's Office, my office, and the Office of Work and Family in a timely manner;
4. keep me fully informed of the activities of the Australian Institute of Family Studies and any significant events and emerging issues relating to the business of the Australian Institute of Family Studies in a timely manner and provide relevant information to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in parallel;
5. pursue the deliverables outlined in the Strategic and Research Plans of the Australian Institute of Family Studies, as well as actively disseminating research findings to policy makers, practitioners and the general public across Australia and internationally;
6. maintain high standards of corporate governance and responsibly manage and report its financial affairs in accordance with the legislative requirements under the *Family Law Act 1975* and the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, and
7. adhere to the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct and Australian Public Service Values as set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister

Statement of Intent

Director to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister

I am pleased to provide the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with my Statement of Intent, in response to his Statement of Expectations for the 12 months from 23 June 2008. I formally commit the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) to meeting the expectations of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, in accordance with the legislative framework of the *Family Law Act 1975*.

This will be achieved through the following responses to each expectation:

1. As outlined in, and consistent with, the Institute's Strategic Plan and Research Plan, the Institute will undertake impartial and policy-relevant research work on family-related issues of the highest standards.
2. The Institute will work cooperatively with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), in particular, the Office of Work and Family (OWF), by:
 - operating in accordance with the established AIFS/PM&C communications protocol;
 - seeking the views of PM&C about research planning; and
 - keeping PM&C informed, in a timely way, about AIFS research findings
 so that AIFS research informs the policy work of PM&C and, in particular, the Office of Work and Family, and assists the Government to make informed decisions on work and family issues.

In addition, the Institute will work collaboratively with other government portfolio departments and agencies.
3. The Institute will respond to request from Prime Minister's Office, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and PM&C in a timely manner.
4. The Institute undertakes to keep the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister fully informed of its activities, including progress against delivering on the Strategic Plan and Research Plan. The Institute will alert the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister to any significant events related to its core business through the preparation of clear, concise and timely advice as appropriate.
5. The Institute will maintain and produce research information of value to key stakeholders from its contract undertakings and other research activity, through the development and implementation of communications plans for all projects, where agreed with stakeholders.
6. The Institute will manage its financial affairs in accordance with the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, and will effectively implement and maintain high standards of corporate governance and accountability through:
 - compliance with all relevant government legislation and policy;
 - the maintenance, regular review and promulgation of all policies and guidelines; and
 - presentation of the Institute's *Annual Report* to Parliament.
7. The Institute will actively disseminate research findings to policy makers, practitioners and the general public across Australia and internationally in a timely manner, and in a range of appropriate formats.
8. The Institute will act in accordance with the Public Service Code of Conduct and the Australian Public Service Values as set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Director, Australian Institute of Family Studies

Senior Leadership Group

The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) comprises the ELT and the General Managers from the corporate and research areas. The group is a strategic leadership forum providing advice to the Director and Deputy Directors.

SLG members 2007–08

Professor Alan Hayes, Director (Chair)

Dr Matthew Gray, Deputy Director (Research)

Ms Sue Tait, Deputy Director (Corporate and Strategy)

Ms Ruth Weston, General Manager (Research)

Dr Daryl Higgins, General Manager (Research)

Ms Diana Smart, General Manager (Research)

Ms Susan Leong, Chief Financial Officer

Mr Ross Millward, General Manager (Information)

Mr Robert Johnstone, General Manager (External Relations, HR, Accountability & Reporting) (June 2007 – February 2008)

Ms Yvonne Paulke, General Manager (External Relations, HR, Accountability & Reporting) (March–June 2008)

Advisory and monitoring committees

The Institute supports sound management of its accountability, ethical and legislative responsibilities through the Advisory Council, the Risk Assessment and Audit Committee (RAAC), and the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Advisory Council

The role of the Advisory Council is to provide specialist advice to the Director in relation to strategic directions for Institute research, any significant proposed changes to the research program, KPIs for the Institute's research activities, and the development of future strategic and research plans. The Advisory Council met twice during 2007–08.

Members of the Advisory Council are appointed by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Advisory Council Committee members, 2007–08

Ms Dianne Gibson (Chair)

Director, Child Dispute Services, FCoA

Ms Glenys Beauchamp

Deputy Secretary, FaHCSIA

Professor Bruce Chapman

Professor, Public Policy, Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU

Professor John Dewar

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Provost, Nathan Campus, Griffith University

Ms Thelma Gertz

Co-ordinator, Indigenous Education, Diocese of Townsville Catholic Education

Ms Marie Leech

Principal, Sancta Sophia College

Professor Paul Smyth

General Manager for Social Action and Research, Brotherhood of St Laurence

[To be appointed]

Associate/Deputy Secretary, PM&C

Risk Assessment and Audit Committee

The RAAC reports directly to the Director. The committee plays a key role in the Institute's corporate governance. It helps ensure effective and efficient use of resources by reviewing the performance and operations of internal controls and performance management systems. It approves the Institute's internal audit program and advises the executive on risk, fraud, compliance and performance. It also provides assurance to the Director on preparing and reviewing financial statements.

The RAAC is chaired by an external member. Membership includes the two Deputy Directors and two independent members external to the Institute. The committee met five times during 2007–08, addressing a range of issues including approval of budgets, *Portfolio Budget Statements*, mid-year budget reviews, internal and external audit processes, FMA Act compliance reviews, and end-of-year financial audits.

RAAC members, 2007–08

Ms Denise Swift, PSM (Chair)

Mr Dennis Mihelyi (Member)

Director, Corporate Services, Australian Industrial Registry

Ms Sue Tait (Member)

Deputy Director (Corporate and Strategy), AIFS

Dr Matthew Gray (Member)

Deputy Director (Research), AIFS

Professor Alan Hayes (Observer)

Director, AIFS

Ms Susan Leong (Observer)

Chief Finance Officer, AIFS

Human Research Ethics Committee

The role of the Institute's Human Research Ethics Committee is to ensure that the ethical standards outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans, and elaborated in the Institute's ethics statement, Ethical

Issues in the Research Process (1996), are met in all research projects undertaken by the Institute.

In particular, the committee must ensure that projects meet the three key principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, as set down in the National Statement. The committee is registered with the Australian Health Ethics Committee, a sub-committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

The Ethics Committee meets at least twice a year to consider new project proposals, receive brief oral and written reports on ongoing projects, consider any complaints or problems that may have arisen regarding ethical issues in Institute research, and review the complaints procedures, as required. The committee also has an expedited review process in place for projects that need approval between meetings of the committee.

Members of the Ethics Committee are appointed for three-year terms by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Ethics Committee members, 2007–08

Reverend Dr Philip Hughes (Chair)

MA, MEd (Melb); DTheol (SEAGST); Christian Research Association

Dr Trevor Batrouney

BA, BEd (Melb); MEd, PhD (Monash); Adjunct Professor RMIT University

Mr Warren Cann (retired from committee, December 2007)

BSc (Hons); MSc (Clin Psych); MAPS; Director, Victorian Parenting Centre

Sr Dr Carol Hogan

BA (Melb); BTheol, PhD (Melbourne College of Divinity)

Professor Richard Ingleby

MA, DPhil (Oxford); LLM (Cambridge); Latham Chambers, Faculty of Business and Law, Deakin University

Dr Duncan Ironmonger

BCom, MCom (Melb); PhD (Cambridge); Department of Economics, University of Melbourne

Ms Helen Glezer

BA (Hons) (Melb); MA (La Trobe)

Ms Rosalie Pattenden (appointed to committee, 2008)

BSc (Hons Psych) (Monash); Accredited Marriage Counsellor, Relationships Australia, Victoria Inc.; LACST; Centacare Melbourne

Dr Kerreen Reiger

BA Hons (Melb); PhD (La Trobe); Department of Sociology, La Trobe University

Corporate and operational reporting

A new position of Executive Manager (Accountability and Reporting) has been created for the oversight of the Institute's accountability and regular reporting

requirements under the Australian Government's FMA Act and to oversee the management of contracts and records within the Institute.

A detailed reporting calendar with clear timelines has been established to ensure Institute compliance with all FMA Act and Commonwealth Public Service requirements. A comprehensive contract register has been established, incorporating AusTender and Senate Order listings, and the Financial Management Information System has been reviewed to ensure greater control and consistency across reporting regimes. All legislative reports have been completed and tabled in a timely manner as required.

Risk management

Internal audit

In 2007, the Institute undertook an open tender process to establish an outsourced internal audit program. PKF Chartered Accountants were engaged to develop a Strategic Internal Audit Program for the forthcoming three years. As part of this, a risk assessment of the Institute was undertaken to identify the strategic business and fraud risks it faces. During the reporting period, three internal audit reports addressing identified risks were undertaken and the reports were tabled with the RAAC:

- purchasing and accounts payable review;
- credit cards and travel expenditure review; and
- Financial Statement quality assurance and Certificate of Compliance review.

Further audits proposed for 2008–09 include a review of payroll, a records management and IT systems review, and a review of human resources management.

Business continuity

Following consultation with members of the FaHCSIA Business Continuity Team in 2007, the Institute's Business Continuity Plan has been developed and provides the necessary guidelines to enable the Institute to:

- take action to prevent potential disruption to the business;
- initiate necessary immediate action to safeguard staff and property at the time a crisis is recognised;
- efficiently plan and effectively manage the recovery of operations of the business to a satisfactory level;
- efficiently plan and effectively manage the resumption of normal business operations in permanent premises with its usual system and staff; and
- efficiently plan and effectively manage significant staff reductions in the event of possible pandemic influenza or other threat to business continuity that may be of a protracted nature.

Protective security

Following the Institute's relocation to new premises in February 2007, an external review of AIFS premises was completed, noting only minor issues to be addressed in complying with requirements of the Australian Government Protective Security

Manual and the Australian Government Information and Communications Technology Security Manual.

There were no major security incidents during the reporting period.

Fraud control

The Fraud Control Plan was updated as required under Regulation 19 of the *Financial Management & Accountability Act 1997* to reflect the transfer of the Institute to the PM&C portfolio and changes in processes that took place during the year to improve fraud risk management.

As the Institute is a small agency, its fraud control responsibilities are managed by the Corporate and Strategy area.

During the financial year 2007–08, no fraud was identified.

Certification of fraud control arrangements follows:

Certification of fraud control arrangements

I, Alan Hayes, certify that I am satisfied that for the financial year 2007–08 the Institute has had:

- a fraud control plan prepared that complies with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines;
- appropriate fraud prevention, detection, investigation and reporting procedures and processes in place; and
- annual fraud data that has been collected and reported in compliance with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines.



Professor Alan Hayes
Director
31 August 2008

Ethical standards

Ethics approval

Research projects conducted by the Institute need to meet the ethical standards outlined in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*, and elaborated in the Institute's ethics statement, *Ethical Issues in the Research Process* (1996). In 2007–08, the Human Research Ethics Committee reviewed several projects via the expedited review process and during face-to-face meetings of the committee as conforming to the relevant ethics requirements (see Human Research Ethics Committee, pp. 100–1).

In the reporting period, the Ethics Committee considered and approved the ethical aspects of the following research projects:

- Australian Temperament Project
- Rural and Regional Families study
- Engaging Fathers in Stronger Families and Communities Strategy Services and Programs
- *Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*
- Stronger Families in Australia project
- Understanding Sexual Offenders and Sexual Offending
- Family Law Reform Evaluation projects:
 - Legislation and Courts Project
 - Separated Families Project
 - Service Provision Project Online Staff Survey

Australian Public Service values in the Institute

The Australian Public Service (APS) values are actively promoted and upheld throughout the Institute. The importance of the APS values is incorporated into the everyday management and operations of the Institute. For example, the obligations of employees to uphold the APS values and abide by the APS Code of Conduct are promoted in training courses; applied to personnel management processes; upheld by guidelines and procedures, which themselves take account of the APS values; and reflected throughout Institute human resources documents, which are available to employees through the Institute intranet.

External scrutiny

In its first year under the FMA Act, the Institute participated in the Australian National Audit Office's (ANAO) ninth performance audit, titled *The Senate Order for Departmental and Agency Contracts (Calendar Year 2006 Compliance)*. The report for this audit was released in September 2007.

The Institute has addressed the recommendations arising from this audit and will continue to do so in 2008–09. This includes development of a comprehensive Procurement Guide that contains a full range of templates, as well as ongoing staff training and induction for new employees. The Institute has introduced ongoing quality control procedures to ensure alignment of content, greater accuracy and control, and increased consistency across reporting areas.

The ANAO made four recommendations to the Institute. AIFS responded to the four recommendations and has implemented processes to ensure full compliance with ANAO requirements for AIFS' use of confidentiality provisions in contracts and compiling of Internet listings, as required by the Senate Order.

The Institute commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers to undertake an external review and provide a report on the Institute's current and projected financial position. The report, presented to the Department of Finance and Administration

in October 2007, found that the Institute has a sound financial position, with growing contract research revenues and good liquidity.

The Institute has addressed and will continue to work on suggestions for improvement made in the report, including improved documentation and regular reporting to the RAAC, as well as implementation of internal audit processes.

Management of human resources

The Institute is fortunate to have staff members with a great diversity of skills, knowledge and experience. This ranges across multiple research disciplines, including social science, psychology, family law, child and adolescent development, demography, economics and statistics, survey design as well as skills in commercial contract negotiation, project management, financial management, information technology, communications and secretariat support. Some staff members have more than 20 years of experience in the workplace, while others have just commenced their careers. The diversity of knowledge and expertise exemplifies one of the major benefits of working in a small organisation. These skills are known and are able to be effectively used in a number of facets of the Institute's operations.

Managing and developing human resources

Consultative processes

In June 2008, the Institute commenced a review of its strategic direction in preparation for the development of the next three-year strategic plan. Interviews were held with over twenty Institute staff covering issues such as work culture, leadership, communication and learning, and development opportunities. The results of the review will be made available in the latter part of 2008.

The Institute's Workplace Relations Committee is another avenue for staff and management to raise and discuss issues in an open environment and provides opportunities for increased dialogue between all levels of staff. Input from the Workplace Relations Committee will play a key role in the development of the Institute's new Collective Agreement, due for implementation in early 2009.

Individual performance management

The Institute's performance management system establishes a link between high-level strategic aims and the work of individual employees. Performance indicators measure how we do our work, as well as achieve key deliverables.

The principles underpinning the system focus on valuing constant communication and feedback between all parties in relation to discussing individual performance. The system also aims to build relationships that encourage open and frank communication and trust, and maximise staff performance through the support of individual development, growth and work satisfaction.

Workforce planning

Workforce planning is an ongoing consideration for the Institute, as reflected in recruitment and staff development initiatives. These initiatives aim to ensure there

are sufficient staff with the requisite skills and capabilities in order for the Institute to meet its strategic goals, now and in the future, and to aid in staff developmental opportunities and retention strategies. The focus on workforce planning responds to continuing pressure to attract and recruit competent staff, together with an increasing need to induct, retain and support them.

Recruitment

In common with much of the APS, the Institute continues to face a tightening labour market and a changing workforce. There continues to be pressure to attract and recruit capable staff. The Institute has been effective in managing and developing its human resources to achieve organisational objectives. The employment of quality staff is vital in ensuring that contract deliverables are met, and the Institute has continued to manage an intensive and extended recruitment process for staff employed to work on a broad range of contracts.

Training and development

During the year, the Institute built upon its work culture and conditions by providing personal and professional development. In addition to core skills training, the Institute focused on addressing priorities identified in individual development plans. Training also covered presentation and communication skills, procurement procedures, project management and risk management. Training was also undertaken to raise staff awareness of the APS Values and Code of Conduct, as many new staff members have come from outside the APS. Such training helps to ensure that both new and existing staff members are aware of their obligations to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The objective of training and development activities is to ensure that the Institute has the organisational capability to respond to research challenges both now and in the future. During 2007–08, the Institute invested \$66,230 in direct training and development activities and \$107,197 in conference attendance.

The effectiveness of the training provided is evaluated in the professional development reviews conducted between managers and individuals.

Occupational health and safety performance

There were no notifiable accidents or investigations reported during 2007–08. See Appendix A for the Institute's occupational health and safety (OHS) policies.

Statistics on staffing

As at 30 June 2008, there were 64 staff—17 males and 47 females—employed at the Institute under the *Public Service Act 1999*. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present profiles of Institute staff by employment classification and gender, and by type of employment for the past two financial years.

Table 4.1 Staffing overview: Actual ongoing and non-ongoing full-time and part-time staff, by gender, at 30 June 2008

	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Male	7	0	8	2	17
Female	24	9	9	5	47
Total	31	9	17	7	64
% of all staff	48	14	27	11	100

Table 4.2 Staffing overview: Actual ongoing and non-ongoing full-time and part-time staff, by gender, at 30 June 2007

	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Male	7	0	4	1	12
Female	22	10	11	6	49
Total	29	10	15	7	61
% of all staff	48	16	25	11	100

Table 4.3 Staffing overview: Actual ongoing and non-ongoing staff, by classification level and gender, at 30 June 2008

Classification	AIFS classification	Ongoing staff		Non-ongoing staff		Total	% of all staff
		Male	Female	Male	Female		
SES Band 1	SES Band 1	–	–	1	1	2	3
Executive Level 2	AIFS Band 5	3	6	–	3	12	19
Executive Level 1	AIFS Band 4	3	5	1	3	12	19
APS 6	AIFS Band 3	1	12	2	1	16	25
APS 5	AIFS Band 3	–	4	4	2	10	16
APS 4	AIFS Band 2	–	5	2	–	7	11
APS 3	AIFS Band 2	–	–	–	4	4	6
APS 2	AIFS Band 1	–	1	–	–	1	2
APS 1	AIFS Band 1	–	–	–	–	–	0
Total		7	33	10	14	64	100
% of all staff		11	52	16	22	100	

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

As Tables 4.1 and 4.3 indicate, the Institute has 62% of staff in ongoing positions and 38% of staff in non-ongoing positions. Recruiting to non-ongoing positions continues to be a challenge for the Institute. To address these challenges, the Institute has continued to offer a proportionally larger number of ongoing positions

and is sensitive to the importance of continued success in attracting contract research work to sustain this strategy.

Certified Agreements and Australian Workplace Agreements

The Institute's 2006–08 Certified Agreement was certified by Australian Industrial Relations Commission Vice-President Hamilton on 28 February 2006. The agreement was certified prior to the amendment of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* by the *Workplace Relations Amendment (WorkChoices) Act 2005*. The agreement runs until February 2009. Collective Agreement negotiations are on schedule to ensure a new agreement will take effect from the expiry date of the current agreement on 28 February 2009.

Details of the number of staff covered by an Australian Workplace Agreement (AWA) or a Certified Agreement at 30 June 2008 are shown in Table 4.4. Non-salary benefits received by staff are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.4 Number of staff covered by AIFS Certified Agreement or AWA, at 30 June 2008

Type of agreement	No. of staff
Certified Agreement	55
AWA	9

Table 4.5 Non-salary benefits by employment category and classification level

Type of agreement	Non-salary benefits
Institute Certified Agreement	Access to employee assistance program
	Study assistance
	Flexible remuneration packaging
	Purchased leave
	Special leave
	Home-based work
	Flexi-time
	Airline lounge membership, if travelling frequently
SES staff: AWA	Motor vehicle, fuel and parking
	Mobile phone for official and incidental personal use
	Airline lounge membership
	Home equipment, comprising standard PC monitor, printer and remote access to network
	Financial and other support for professional and personal development
	Flexible remuneration packaging
Non-SES staff: AWA	Airline lounge membership
	Mobile phone for official and personal use
	Flexible remuneration packaging
	Remote access to network

Salary ranges and performance pay

Table 4.6 Staffing overview: Salary ranges by classification

AIFS classification	Salary range
SES Band 1	\$127,000–147,000
AIFS Band 5	\$85,974–102,443
AIFS Band 4	\$74,542–82,318
AIFS Band 3	\$54,192–66,793
AIFS Band 2	\$43,309–52,409
AIFS Band 1	\$33,600–42,166

Table 4.7 Performance pay

Level	Number	Aggregated amount	Average	Minimum	Maximum
SES 1	2	\$29,637	\$14,818	\$14,818	\$14,818
Executive Level 2	9	\$41,728	\$4,636	\$1,140	\$8,649

Commonwealth Disability Strategy

There are many types of disability, and people may have disabilities as a result of accident, illness or genetic disorder. Under the Commonwealth Disability Strategy framework, the Institute has a strong commitment to provide:

- access to Institute products and services for clients with disabilities; and
- equal employment opportunity for people with disabilities.

The Institute's performance against the Commonwealth Disability Strategy is set out in Tables 4.8 and 4.9. Goals and actions for 2009–10 are being developed as part of the Strategic Plan 2009–11 and Collective Agreement for 2009 onwards.

Table 4.8 Commonwealth Disability Strategy: Performance requirements of the provider role

Performance indicator	Current level of performance
1. Providers have established mechanisms for quality improvement and assurance.	<p>The Institute operates in accordance with the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO) guidelines relating to accessibility for visually impaired users and is working to ensure that the Institute website meets the requirements of the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.</p> <p>The Institute is committed to the development of a website that is accessible to all people with impairments (including visual impairment). However, due to limitations, it is not possible to make the website entirely accessible in a cost-effective manner. This limitation means that some tables, products or parts of the web site may be less accessible to some visually impaired users.</p>

<p>2. Providers have an established service charter that specifies the roles of the provider and consumer, and service standards that address accessibility for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>A free service to convert data files into an alternative format is available for people with vision impairment or other accessibility requirements.</p>
<p>3. Complaints/grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, in place to address concerns raised about performance.</p>	<p>Any complaints or grievances regarding the Institute providing services to people with disabilities are raised directly with the delegate for investigation.</p>

Table 4.9 Commonwealth Disability Strategy: Performance requirements of the employer role

Performance indicator	Current level of performance
<p>1. Employment policies, procedures and practices comply with the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>.</p>	<p>All Institute employment policies, procedures and practices have been developed in line with the APS Values and comply with the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>. The principles of the Act, in terms of eliminating discrimination, promoting equity and responding to the diverse needs of the Australian community, are values upheld by the Institute and the Institute Certified Agreement.</p>
<p>2. Recruitment information for potential job applicants is available in accessible formats on request.</p>	<p>All standard recruitment materials are provided in accessible formats and each recruitment panel is supported in handling requests for accessible information. Any request for accessible information is logged, with no requests made during 2007–08.</p>
<p>3. Agency recruiters and managers apply the principle of “reasonable adjustment”.</p>	<p>Information gathered from the Institute Application Cover Sheet enables the Institute selection panel to seek further information with regard to possible reasonable adjustment requirements for an interview situation.</p>
<p>4/5. Training and development programs consider the needs of staff with disabilities and include information on disability issues as they relate to the content of the program.</p>	<p>The Institute’s training and development programs take into consideration any special needs of employees. In accordance with the Disability Strategy, all training and development activities aim to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ learner-centred; ■ designed using an instructional design phase that considers the diverse needs and learning styles of trainees; ■ delivered and event-managed with activities that provide for the reasonable adjustment requirements of the trainees, such as specific hearing, language/translator and mobility issues; and ■ designed to continue the work with specific components on disability and reasonable adjustment in management and leadership development aspects of programs.

6. Complaints/ grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, in place to address issues and concerns raised by staff.

The Institute provides information to employees about external appeal mechanisms. In addition to more formal mechanisms set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*, the Institute has agreed internal procedures for resolving workplace issues that have been established under the Institute Certified Agreement 2006–08.

Assets management

The Institute maintains a detailed assets register. Assets management is not a significant aspect of the strategic business of the Institute.

Purchasing

All purchasing is carried out in line with the requirements of the *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines*. A detailed Procurement Guide was prepared during the reporting period. The guide is a key Institute document detailing Institute policy, principles, process and procedures in line with the *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines* and the Director's Instructions. A full range of templates for all aspects of purchasing and approval accompany the guide. All staff have undertaken training to support compliance with requirements. In addition, a new position was created within the Institute, Executive Manager (Accountability and Reporting), to oversee implementation of the *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines* requirements and to ensure accurate and timely reporting.

Consultants

The Institute's core business to provide research to inform and influence government policy often requires the use of consultant expertise. Consultants are generally engaged when particular specialist expertise is necessary, sufficiently skilled expertise is not immediately available in-house, or independent advice on an issue is required.

The services provided by consultants in the reporting period included provision of research reports, data analysis, survey design, review and audit of financial activities and business process analysis.

Processes for the engagement of consultants are consistent with the *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines* and the Director's Instructions and are detailed in the Institute's Procurement Guide. The guide is a consolidation of the Institute's policies, business rules, and procedures related to purchasing. It is underpinned by the Director's Instructions, issued in July 2006.

As with all procurement, the priority in the engagement of consultants is to obtain value for money. Competitive processes are used for the selection of consultants, and the Director's Instructions contain guidelines for the approval of expenditure.

The Institute did not have any contracts exempt from the gazettal requirement during 2007–08. New consultancies let to the value of \$10,000 or more during 2007–08 are listed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 New consultancies let to the value of \$10,000 or more, 2007–08

Consultant name	Description	Contract price ¹	Selection process ²	Justification ³
PKF Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers	Internal audit services	\$103,400	Open tender	C
Cut-Through Communications Pty Ltd	Media relations services	\$70,000	Open tender	A
Hadsel Grace Associates	Media relations services	\$45,962	Select tender	A
Murdoch Children's Research Institute	Analysis of the home to school transitions of children from financially disadvantaged families	\$33,000	Direct source	B
Executive Central Group Pty Ltd	Development of the 2009–11 Strategic Plan	\$27,500	Direct source	C
Murdoch Children's Research Institute	Preparation of scoping report for possible physical and biomarker modules for LSAC project	\$23,989	Direct source	B
Executive Central Group Pty Ltd	Executive coaching	\$20,000	Select tender	C
Praxis Alternatives Pty Ltd (Erin Wilson)	Provision of advice and assistance in the Promising Practice Profiles submissions	\$19,969	Direct source	B
Urbis JHD	Evaluation of the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse	\$19,965	Select tender	C
University of New South Wales, Social Policy Research Centre	Preparing expert issues paper	\$19,943	Select tender	B
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Independent review of the financial health of the Institute	\$18,778	Direct source	C
Dwycon Pty Ltd	Development of Specialist Practice Guides	\$15,000	Direct source	B
Sam Egger	Data analysis for the Assessment and Action (A&AR) Outcomes Data Analysis project	\$12,892	Direct source	B

1 Inclusive of goods and services tax (GST).

2 Explanation of selection process terms drawn from the *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines* (January 2005):

- Open tender: Request for tender is published inviting all businesses that satisfy the conditions for participation to submit tenders.
- Select tender: Procuring agency selects which potential suppliers are invited to submit tenders in accordance with the mandatory procurement procedures.
- Direct source: Available only under certain defined circumstances. An agency may contract a single potential supplier or suppliers of its choice and for which conditions for direct sourcing apply under the mandatory procurement procedures.
- Panel: A number of suppliers, usually selected through a single procurement process, may each supply property or services to an agency as specified in the panel arrangements.

3 Justification for decision to use consultancy:

- A. Skills currently unavailable within the Institute.
- B. Requirements for collection of quantitative/qualitative statistical information.
- C. Requirement for independent or impartial research/assessment by an independent organisation.

During 2007–08, 35 new consultancy contracts (including those less than \$10,000) were entered into, involving total actual expenditure of \$353,308. In addition, 19 ongoing consultancy contracts were active during the year, involving total actual expenditure of \$4,480,995. Expenditure for the year totalled \$4,834,303.

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