

# Management accountability

# MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Management accountability is achieved with the support of the Corporate and Strategy area 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, human resources and information technology policies and practices.

## Corporate governance

The Institute operates under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act). The corporate focus throughout 2008–09 has been the effective maintenance of high standards of governance, accountability and reporting in order to fulfill all FMA requirements and build organisational capacity to achieve the Institute’s research and communication objectives.

An extensive evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2006–08 was undertaken and a new plan developed to provide an overarching framework for the Institute’s strategic direction and research planning for the next three-year period, 2009–10 to 2011–12.

In addition, the Institute undertook a comprehensive process of review of its Certified Agreement which was extended and varied in March 2009 for a period of three years.

## 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.

## 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

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

#### Strategic Leadership Group

The Strategic Leadership Group comprises the Executive 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.

## *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, key performance indicators for the Institute's research activities, and the development of future strategic and research plans. The Advisory Council met three times during 2008–09.

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

### *Advisory Council Committee members, 2008–09*

**Dianne Gibson** (Chair), Director, Child Dispute Services, Family Court of Australia

**Glenys Beauchamp**, Deputy Secretary, FaHCSIA

**Professor Bruce Chapman AM**, Professor, Public Policy, Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU

**Professor John Dewar**, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Global Relations), The University of Melbourne

**Thelma Gertz**, Co-ordinator, Indigenous Education, Diocese of Townsville Catholic Education

**Marie Leech**, Principal, Sancta Sophia College

**Professor Paul Smyth**, General Manager for Social Action and Research, Brotherhood of St Laurence

**Ben Rimmer**, Deputy Secretary Nominee of the Secretary, PM&C

### *Risk Assessment and Audit Committee*

The RAAC reports to the Director, and 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 four times during 2008–09, addressing a range of issues including approval of budgets, Portfolio Budget Statements, mid-year budget reviews, internal and external audit processes, fraud control, FMA Act compliance reviews, update of the Director's Instructions, and the Institute's finance rules and end-of-year financial audits.

### *RAAC members, 2008–09*

**Denise Swift**, PSM (Chair)

**Dennis Mihelyi** (Member), Director, Corporate Services, Australian Industrial Registry

**Sue Tait** (Member), Deputy Director (Corporate and Strategy), AIFS

**Dr Matthew Gray** (Member), Deputy Director (Research), AIFS

**Professor Alan Hayes** (Observer), Director, AIFS

**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.

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, 2008–09*

**Reverend Dr Philip Hughes** (Chair)—retired December 2008—MA, MEd (Melb); DTheol (SEAGST); Christian Research Association

**Dr Duncan Ironmonger** (Chair)—appointed as Chair December 2008—BCom, MCom (Melb); PhD (Cambridge); Department of Economics, University of Melbourne

**Dr Trevor Batrouney**, BA, BEd (Melb); MEd, PhD (Monash); Adjunct Professor, RMIT University

**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

**Helen Glezer**, BA (Hons) (Melb); MA (La Trobe)

**Rosalie Pattenden**, BSc (Hons Psych) (Monash); Accredited Marriage Counsellor, Relationships Australia (Victoria); LACST; Centacare Melbourne

**Dr Kerreen Reiger**, BA Hons (Melb); PhD (La Trobe); Department of Sociology, La Trobe University

### Corporate and statutory reporting

Building on the development of the reporting calendar, contract register and review of the Financial Management Information System, the Institute established corporate workplans in August/September 2008 and reviewed its performance management process for individuals to launch the new Performance Development and Review Program in March 2009. Through

its new planning processes, the Institute has increased compliance standards and introduced a greater awareness of reporting performance against outcomes.

An outcomes focus has been emphasised through the establishment of trend forecasting for the Parliamentary Budget Statements for 2009–10, which is aligned to the goals in the Institute's new Strategic Plan 2009–12. The Institute will continue to work to strengthen these processes in 2009–10, including streamlining reporting processes to link preparations for Senate Estimates, annual reporting and the PBS, and finalising an overarching Corporate Plan to underpin corporate workplans.

All statutory reports were completed and tabled in a timely manner as required.

### *Director's Instructions and finance rules*

In March 2009, the Institute undertook a review and update of the Director's Instructions in accordance with the Financial Framework Legislation 2008 changes that came into effect on 20 March 2009.

In addition to the update of the Director's Instructions, the Institute undertook an extensive review and update of its finance rules. The revised rules were endorsed by the RAAC in June 2009 and posted on the staff intranet. They document the Institute's rules and processes for the implementation of the Director's Instructions and reflect recent updates to the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines, the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* and the Financial Management and Accountability Regulations.

The revised Director's Instructions and finance rules represent an ongoing commitment to the process of review, improvement and alignment of the Institute's documentation to ensure effective operation and compliance with the requirements of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* under which it operates.

## 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, four internal audit reports addressing identified risks were undertaken and the reports were tabled with the RAAC:

- fraud risk and fraud control plan review;
- payroll review;
- information technology systems review; and
- certificate of compliance review.

Further audits proposed for 2009–10 include a review of a records management and business continuity management.

## Business continuity

The Institute's Business Continuity Plan 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.

The Business Continuity Plan was revised during the year and tested in the context of the H1N1 pandemic. The revised plan was approved by the RAAC in August 2008.

## Protective security

An Institute Security Plan and Security Policy & Procedures document were developed and ratified by the RAAC in December 2008, 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 Institute's fraud control responsibilities are managed by the Corporate and Strategy area. Following a review of the fraud risk assessment & fraud control plan by independent internal auditors in November 2008, the Fraud Control Plan was updated in March 2009 and approved at the RAAC meeting in March 2009.

During the financial year 2008-09, no fraud was identified.

### *Certification of fraud control arrangements*

I, Alan Hayes, certify that I am satisfied that for the financial year 2008-09 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.

  
Alan Hayes, Director  
31 August 2009

## Ethical standards

### *Ethics approval*

In 2008–09, the Human Research Ethics Committee reviewed several projects via the expedited review process and during face-to-face meetings of the committee as to whether they conform to the relevant ethics requirements (see Human Research Ethics Committee, p. 80).

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

- *Growing Up in Australia*: Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, Wave 4
- Family Law Evaluation
- General Population of Parents Survey 2009
- Grandparents in Context of Separated Families Project
- Legislation & Courts Project File Analysis and Family Lawyers Survey
- Longitudinal Study of Separated Families Project
- Service Provision Project: Client Survey
- Service Provision Project: Wave 2 Qualitative Study
- Service Provision Project: Survey of Family Relationship Services Staff

### *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

The Institute is subject to an annual statutory audit performed by the Australian National Audit Office. In addition, regular internal audit reviews are undertaken by an independent contractor. The outcomes of all audits are presented to the Risk Assessment and Audit Committee and plans developed for the implementation of recommendations and the ongoing monitoring of resultant actions for improved processes.

The Institute does not have statutory administrative decision-making powers and was not subject to any judicial decisions or decisions of administrative tribunals in 2008–09.

## Management of human resources

The Institute is fortunate to have employees with a great diversity of skills, knowledge and experience. This ranges across research knowledge in multiple disciplines—including social science, psychology, family law, child and adolescent development, demography, economics and statistics, and survey design—to skills such as commercial contract negotiation, project

management, financial management, information technology, communications and secretariat support. Some employees 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.

The Institute is proud of its ability to attract, develop and retain highly skilled employees to continually strengthen its human and intellectual capital. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show the highest qualifications gained by Institute employees overall and by those employed in the Research area.

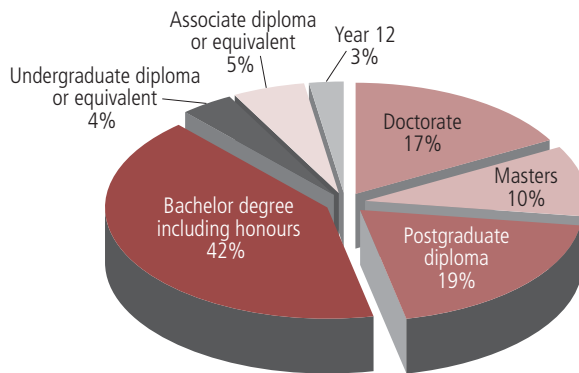


Figure 4.1 Employee qualifications as at 30 June 2009

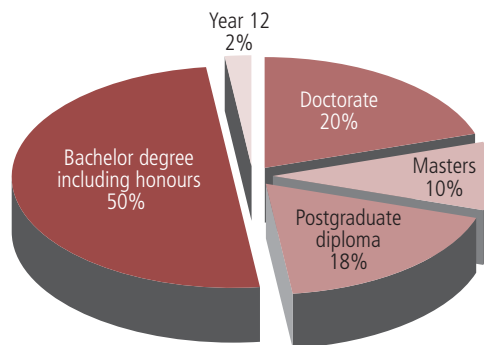


Figure 4.2 Research employee qualifications as at 30 June 2009

### Consultative processes

The Institute is committed to consulting with its employees. In September 2008, the Institute continued a review of its strategic direction in preparation for the development of the next three-year strategic plan by conducting a Staff Planning Day. All employees of the Institute were invited to attend the event and strategies were identified in the areas of communication, people, resources and administration. In response, all-staff meetings were scheduled quarterly to review

actions and provide a forum for ongoing communication, and a further all-day event is planned for later in 2009.

### *Workplace Relations Committee*

The Workplace Relations Committee provides a forum for management and employees to discuss matters affecting the workplace in general as well as issues relating to the Certified Agreement. The committee comprises three representatives each from management and employees, and a Community and Public Sector Union representative. Employees are encouraged to contribute their ideas or raise any concerns regarding their workplace with their representatives. The committee is chaired by the Executive Manager (Human Resources) and meets quarterly.

Input from the Workplace Relations Committee is playing a key role in a review of the Institute's human resources policies and guidelines arising from the extension and variation of the 2006-08 Certified Agreement in March 2009.

During the year, the committee undertook a diverse range of activities, including:

- commencement of the process for the extension and variation of the Certified Agreement prior to the formation of the negotiation committee;
- consultation on comprehensive changes to accommodation arrangements; and
- consultation on significant changes to the Performance Development and Review program.

### *Health and Safety Committee*

The establishment of a Health and Safety Committee is a requirement under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991*. Under the Health and Safety Management Arrangement approved in September 2008, the committee meets four times per year and facilitates discussion between management and employees regarding occupational health and safety matters in the workplace. The arrangement sets out the framework for the operation of the committee and occupational health and safety practices at the Institute.

Employees are encouraged to participate by consulting with their elected staff representatives, who use the committee forum to raise and manage ongoing health and safety matters.

### *Individual performance management*

The Institute conducted a review of its performance management program in early 2009, with the aim of strengthening the link between high-level strategic goals and the work of individual employees. Employees were provided with an opportunity to comment on the new guidelines. Employee and manager information sessions were delivered to support the development of individual Performance Development and Review plans under the changed program.

The principles underpinning the program focus on ongoing communication and feedback between all parties in relation to individual performance. The program also aims to build relationships based on mutual trust and respect that encourage open and frank discussions and maximises employee performance through the provision of individual development, opportunities for growth and work satisfaction.

## Workforce planning

During the latter part of 2008–09, the Institute initiated action to commence a workforce planning project. The aim of the project is to ensure there are sufficient employees with the requisite skills and capabilities to enable the Institute to meet its strategic goals, now and in the future, and to assist in employee development opportunities and retention strategies. The implementation of the project responds to continuing pressure to attract, retain and develop employees, in alignment with the strategic direction of the Institute.

## Recruitment

The Institute reviewed its recruitment processes in mid-2008 to align them with the Australian Public Service Commission's recommendations published in the *Better Faster* guidelines. This has enabled the Institute to streamline recruitment and introduce efficiencies to minimise the timeframe from identification of a vacancy through to appointment to the role.

The majority of vacancies are advertised in the press and in the weekly online APSjobs. The Institute has undertaken more online advertising in 2008–09, providing detailed information about individual vacancies on its website or, alternatively, on request from the designated contact officer. There has been a trend towards a larger number of applications per position, in the main attributed to the global economic crisis and increasing unemployment during 2008–09.

The Institute conducted a bulk recruitment process for Research Officers and Senior Research Officers in September 2008 to establish a merit listing of potential employees as a means to improve efficiencies in the recruitment timeframe for identified vacancies in the research group. Six non-ongoing vacancies were filled through this process.

There is ongoing pressure to recruit appropriately skilled and experienced employees. In line with the workforce planning project, the Institute will continue to develop and introduce strategies throughout 2009–10 to recruit and retain capable staff.

## Learning and development

The objective of learning 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 the year, the Institute continued to develop its workforce capability by providing professional learning and development. Inhouse training programs covered giving and receiving feedback, media, the APS Values and Code of Conduct, minute/note-taking and technical skills such as use of STATA and Excel software programs. The Institute also trialled a comprehensive induction session for new employees to provide an awareness of the Institute's strategies, research activities and corporate responsibilities. Expansion of induction activities will continue in 2009–10.

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

During 2008–09, the Institute invested \$64,133 in direct learning and development activities and \$85,998 in conference attendance, and the equivalent of 299 training days or \$112,152 in wages based on average salary.

The Institute continues to provide professional development opportunities for employees via professional memberships and support for formal study through its Study Assistance Program.

## Occupational health and safety performance

On an annual basis, the Institute runs a free flu vaccination program for all staff. Each employee is also able to receive reimbursement of \$150 for participating in appropriate health promotion activities under the Promoting Good Health Scheme. The scheme aims to encourage staff to improve their fitness and general health. Further, employees have access to subsidised eyesight testing, including the provision of glasses and regular workstation assessments that immediately implement corrective measures if required, such as personally designed ergonomic equipment. The Institute will review its health and wellbeing strategies during 2009–10.

There were no notifiable accidents or investigations reported during 2008–09.

## Productivity gains

The Institute has continued to evaluate its functions, structure and procedures with a view to streamlining administrative processes and systems to realise additional productivity savings. During 2008–09, employees have supported the Institute in the rationalisation of accommodation space and introduction of environmental management initiatives.

Work continues on information management and technology improvements and efficiencies to create further productivity gains. The development of annual workplans linked to employees' Performance Development and Review plans and relevant Institute plans has provided clarity to individuals on expected outcomes.

Through the extension and variation of the Certified Agreement in March 2009, productivity gains were made through the extension of the working day by 9 minutes, from 7 hours 21 minutes to 7 hours 30 minutes. Further, the Institute and its employees will aim to increase productivity savings through a reduction in travel costs and improved management and reporting of unscheduled absences in 2009–10.

## Statistics on staffing

As at 30 June 2009, there were 75 staff—20 males and 55 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.

As Tables 4.1 and 4.3 indicate, the Institute has 55% of staff in ongoing positions and 45% of staff in non-ongoing positions. There has been an increase of 7% in non-ongoing positions realised by the Institute's continued success in attracting contract research work and a temporary demand for additional resources at peak times.

## Certified Agreements, determinations and Australian Workplace Agreements

The Institute commenced the process to review its Certified Agreement with employee representatives and the Community and Public Sector Union in July 2008. Negotiations through regular meetings involving all parties from September 2008 concluded successfully in November 2008 and moved to the approval and certification processes. As a consequence, the extension

**Table 4.1 Staffing overview: Actual ongoing and non-ongoing full-time and part-time staff, by gender, at 30 June 2009**

	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Male	8	1	8	3	20
Female	25	7	11	12	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>75</b>
% of all staff	44	11	25	20	100

**Table 4.2 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>64</b>
% of all staff	48	14	27	11	100

**Table 4.3 Staffing overview: Actual ongoing and non-ongoing staff, by classification level and gender, at 30 June 2009**

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	7	–	2	12	16
Executive Level 1	AIFS Band 4	3	7	–	4	14	18
APS 6	AIFS Band 3	2	11	3	4	20	26
APS 5	AIFS Band 3	–	2	3	3	8	11
APS 4	AIFS Band 2	–	3	–	2	5	7
APS 3	AIFS Band 2	–	1	4	7	12	16
APS 2	AIFS Band 1	–	1	1	–	2	3
APS 1	AIFS Band 1	–	–	–	–	–	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>
% of all staff		12	42	15	31	100	

Note: 7 employees on higher duties were counted at the higher duties level.

and variation of the Institute’s 2006–08 Certified Agreement was certified by Australian Industrial Relations Commission Vice-President Hamilton on 3 March 2009. The agreement was extended and varied under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* prior to the introduction of the *Fair Work Act 2009*. The agreement runs until March 2012 and provides for:

- four pay increases, totaling 16% across three years;
- new and increased allowances;
- increased leave provisions for maternity and adoptive leave;
- paid parental leave for non-primary care givers;
- changes to the Performance Development and Review Program;
- an increase in ordinary hours from 7 hours 21 minutes to 7 hours 30 minutes per day.

Details of the number of staff covered by a Certified Agreement, an Australian Workplace Agreement (AWA) or an s24(1) Determination at 30 June 2009 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, AWA or s24(1) Determination, at 30 June 2009**

Type of agreement	No. of staff
Certified Agreement*	72
AWA	1
s24(1) Determination	2

Note: \* 8 EL2 employees covered by the Certified Agreement have been provided with s24(1) Determinations to supplement pre-existing employment terms and conditions under clause 6.5 of the Certified Agreement.

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

Type of agreement	Non-salary benefits
Certified Agreement	Access to Employee Assistance Program; study assistance; flexible remuneration packaging; purchased leave; paid non-primary caregiver parental leave; special leave; home-based work; flextime; airline lounge membership, if travelling frequently; good health allowance; volunteer allowances
Non-SES staff: s24(1) Determination	Airline lounge membership; mobile phone; computer and remote access to network; incidental child care; financial and other support for professional and personal development; flexible remuneration packaging
SES staff: s24(1) Determination	Motor vehicle, fuel and parking; airline lounge membership; mobile phone; home office equipment 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; computer and remote access to network; flexible remuneration packaging

## Salary ranges

**Table 4.6 Staffing overview: Salary ranges by classification, at 30 June 2009**

AIFS classification	Salary range
SES Band 1	\$127,000–147,000
AIFS Band 5	\$90,273–107,565
AIFS Band 4	\$78,269–86,434
AIFS Band 3	\$56,902–70,133
AIFS Band 2	\$45,474–55,029
AIFS Band 1	\$35,280–44,274

## Performance pay

SES employees and Executive Level 2 employees on AWAs or s24(1) Determinations may qualify for a performance bonus of up to 15% if they achieve a performance rating of fully effective or above. Table 4.7 outlines performance payment information for the 2008 performance cycle.

**Table 4.7 Performance pay**

Level	Number	Aggregated amount	Average	Minimum	Maximum
SES 1 & EL2	9	\$98,442	\$10,938	\$3,184	\$20,550

## 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 as detailed in the Institute's finance rules and *Procurement Process Guide*. The guide is a key Institute document detailing Institute policy, principles, processes 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. The guide was updated during the reporting period to incorporate the December 2008 changes to the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines. All staff have undertaken training to support compliance with requirements.

## Consultants

The Institute's core business to conduct research and communicate findings often requires the use of consultant expertise. Consultants are generally engaged when particular specialist

expertise is necessary, sufficiently skilled expertise is not immediately available inhouse, 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, finance rules and Director’s Instructions and are detailed in the Institute’s *Procurement Process Guide*. 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.

Consultancies let to the value of \$10,000 or more during 2008–09 are listed in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8 New consultancies let to the value of \$10,000 or more, 2008–09**

Consultant name	Description	Contract price <sup>1</sup>	Selection process <sup>2</sup>	Justification <sup>3</sup>
Australian National University	Analysis of survey results for Rural and regional families: The impact of drought, economic and social change	\$45,604	Direct source	B
University of New South Wales	Preparing expert issues paper	\$22,144	Direct source	C
Heaney, Blaylock and Associates Pty Ltd	Development of AIFS Certified Agreement	\$21,703	Direct source	B
PriceWaterhouse Coopers	Review of AIFS internal costing models	\$16,218	Direct source	B

Notes:

- 1 Inclusive of goods and services tax (GST).
- 2 Explanation of selection process terms drawn from the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (December 2008):
  - Open tender: A procurement procedure in which a request for tender is published inviting all businesses that satisfy the conditions for participation to submit tenders. Public tenders are generally sought from the Australian Government AusTender Internet site.
  - Select tender: A procurement procedure in which the procuring agency selects which potential suppliers are invited to submit tenders. This procurement may only be used under certain defined circumstances.
  - Direct source: A form of restricted tendering, available only under certain defined circumstances, with a single potential supplier or suppliers being invited to bid because of their unique expertise and/or their special ability to supply the goods and/or services sought.
  - Panel: An arrangement under which a number of suppliers, initially selected through an open tender process, may each supply property or services to an agency as specified in the panel arrangements. Quotes are sought from suppliers that have pre-qualified on the agency panels to supply the government. This category includes standing offers and supplier panels where the supplier of goods and services may be provided for a pre-determined length of time, usually at a pre-arranged price.
- 3 Justification for decision to use consultancy:
  - A. Skills currently unavailable within agency.
  - B. Need for specialised or professional skills.
  - C. Need for independent research or assessment.

During 2008–09, 15 new consultancy contracts were entered into (including those to the value of less than \$10,000), involving total actual expenditure of \$167,354. In addition, 22

ongoing consultancy contracts were active during the year, involving total actual expenditure of \$2,061,756. Expenditure for the year totaled \$2,229,110.

Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on contracts and consultancies. Information on the value of contracts and consultancies is available on the AusTender website: <[www.tenders.gov.au](http://www.tenders.gov.au)>. Contracts above the value of \$100,000 are detailed on the AIFS website: <[www.aifs.gov.au](http://www.aifs.gov.au)>.

## Australian National Audit Office Access Clauses

The Institute's contract templates contain standard clauses to provide for the Auditor-General to have access to the contractor's premises. All contracts let during the reporting period of \$100,000 or more (exclusive of GST) contained these standard clauses.

## Exempt contracts

The Institute has not entered into any contracts or standing offers that have been exempted from being published in AusTender.

## 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 4.9 and 4.10. Goals and actions for 2009-10 are being developed as part of the Strategic Plan 2009-12 and extension and variation of the Certified Agreement for 2009 onwards.

**Table 4.9 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	The Institute operates in accordance with the Australian Government Information Management Office 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 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The Institute is committed to the development of a website that is accessible to all people with impairments (including visual impairment). The Institute is aware that some data on the website may be less accessible to a few visually impaired users and continues to work towards improving accessibility. Users are able to contact the Institute for accessible versions of data, which are supplied on a case-by-case basis.

Performance indicator	Current level of performance
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	A free service to convert data files into an alternative format is available for people with vision impairment or other accessibility requirements.
3. Complaints/grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, in place to address concerns raised about performance	Any complaints or grievances regarding the Institute providing services to people with disabilities are raised directly with the delegate for investigation.

**Table 4.10 Commonwealth Disability Strategy: Performance requirements of the employer role**

Performance indicator	Current level of performance
1. Employment policies, procedures and practices comply with the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>	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 Australian Institute of Family Studies Certified Agreement 2006–08 (as amended 3 March 2009).
2. Recruitment information for potential job applicants is available in accessible formats on request	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 2008–09.
3. Agency recruiters and managers apply the principle of “reasonable adjustment”	Information gathered from the applicants enables the Institute to seek further information with regard to possible reasonable adjustment requirements for an interview situation or the work environment upon commencement.
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	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: 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 <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> , the Institute has agreed internal procedures for resolving workplace issues that have been established under the Australian Institute of Family Studies Certified Agreement 2006–2008 (as amended 3 March 2009).