



31 May 2018

EXECUTIVE MINUTE
on
JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT
REPORT 469 - Commonwealth Performance Framework

Purpose

To provide the Committee an assurance on how Comcare has embedded the corporate planning requirements to address the identified 'opportunities for improvement' from Audit Report No. 54

Response

Recommendation No: 1

The Committee recommends that each of the four audited Commonwealth entities from Audit Report No. 54 (2016-17), Corporate Planning in the Australian Public Sector 2016-17, report back to the Committee on how its senior management team is working to further embed the corporate planning requirements in future planning cycles, to address the audit finding at paragraph 13 of Audit Report No. 54 and with reference to the other 'opportunities for improvement' identified as part of the audit.

Summary response: Agreed

Comcare's primary planning document is the Corporate Plan, as intended by the enhanced Commonwealth performance framework. The planning process for this document commences in October, preceding Comcare's annual performance cycle for the next financial year.

All areas identified as 'opportunities for improvement' in Audit Report No.54, have been addressed through the third and fourth cycle of Comcare's corporate planning.

The areas of opportunity relevant to Comcare were:

- enhancing information on the main environmental factors and potential implications in achieving the purposes
- enhancing information on how performance is measured and assessed in achieving purposes over the life of the plan
- clearly outlining the strategies to achieve the purposes over the life of the plan
- outlining the key risks that impact the achievement of purposes and the approach to managing risk.

Supporting rationale

Comcare adopted an incremental approach to improving its planning cycles, based on the Audit Report No. 54 recommendations. During the development of Comcare's *Corporate Plan 2018—2022* (the Plan) we took further opportunities for improvement as identified by the:

- Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
- Department of Finance (Finance) Community of Practice events
- Finance lessons learnt papers
- internal lessons learnt from the 2017—18 process.

Comcare has embedded the *Commonwealth Performance Framework* requirements into its quarterly reporting processes. Comcare's Executive has clear oversight of the organisation's non-financial performance against its Corporate Plan, Portfolio Budget Statements and supporting Operational Plan.

Comcare is actively scanning businesses and government agencies for better practice principles in relation to planning and reporting. Two engagement opportunities were initiated with the Performance Reporting team, Department of Finance and the Comcare and Seacare Audit and Risk Committee to complement Comcare's continuous improvement cycle pertaining to its Corporate Plans and Annual Performance Statements.

The continuous improvements in Comcare's planning process has seen the Plan released to the Minister of Finance (via Finance) on 10 May 2018. Comcare was the second Commonwealth entity to notify Finance of the completion of its 2018—2022 plan.

Comcare has established a committee to oversee its planning and reporting requirements, aligning our financial and non-financial performance requirements. The committee is a sub-committee of Comcare's Finance Committee. Comcare is also updating its planning and reporting process guide, to incorporate the ANAO and Finance promoted principle of the 'Annual Performance Cycle'.

In March 2017, Comcare introduced a designated resource to oversee both planning and reporting requirements for Comcare. This initiative, to establish expertise to support the Executive, was identified as a key learning for other commonwealth entities in the Audit Report No. 33 (2017—18).

The benefits of the committee and the designated resource has resulted in higher levels of engagement across our business areas. Our processes have been streamlined, enabling the completion of our plans and reports prior to legislative deadlines.

Comcare is also developing a Benefits Realisation Model (BRM) for the business. While Comcare has successfully implemented a BRM within our project management framework, the development and implementation of the Model across the business will support evaluation of outcomes.

On 20 February 2018, Finance reviewed our 2018-2022 Corporate Plan and was complimentary of both the Plan and our processes, validating the improvements made since 2016. The following is feedback provided to Comcare on the Comcare's Corporate Plan 2018—2022:

Introduction/Overview/Purposes

The Overview and the Purposes/Role section relate to each other. Excellent graphical representation of your corporate plan. The Role and Purposes section has a strong narrative – discussing Comcare's legislative requirements, purposes and their relation to the strategic priorities.

Operating Environment

The operating environment is well set out, identifying collaborative links with others, providing good discussion supported by a graphic that presents the operating environment and the key stakeholders. The risk section is strong identifying actual risks facing Comcare. Risk is integrated throughout the entire plan. The discussion of capability is strong and tells readers exactly what Comcare needs to achieve the purposes. Finance like that the capability is not just contained to people and IT, but includes project management as a key capability you require.

Performance

The performance section is strong. Having the performance broken down by theme provides context and allows for a clear read.

General Comments

Finance felt that this was a very strong corporate plan, with minor editing requirements needed. The graphics are all useful and fit for purpose, there is no wasted space that could be construed as pointless, and everything relates to the performance story. The document has excellent internal integration, and integrates well with portfolio budget statements.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Taylor

Accountable Authority of Comcare