
**RURAL AND REGIONAL
AFFAIRS
AND TRANSPORT LEGISLATION
COMMITTEE**

Annual Reports (No. 2 of 2002)

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(40TH PARLIAMENT)

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**LIST OF ANNUAL REPORTS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE
DURING THE PERIOD 1 NOVEMBER 2001 TO 30 JUNE 2002
AND DATE OF TABLING IN THE SENATE**

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REVIEW OF ANNUAL REPORTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Senate Standing Orders

1.1 In accordance with Senate Standing Order 25 (21), annual reports of departments and agencies shall stand referred to the legislation committees in accordance with an allocation of departments and agencies in a resolution of the Senate. Each committee shall:

- (a) Examine each annual report referred to it and report to the Senate whether the report is apparently satisfactory.
- (b) Consider in more detail, and report to the Senate on, each annual report which is not apparently satisfactory, and on the other annual reports which it selects for more detailed consideration.
- (c) Investigate and report to the Senate on any lateness in the presentation of annual reports.
- (d) In considering an annual report, take into account any relevant remarks about the report made in debate in the Senate.
- (e) If the committee so determines, consider annual reports of departments and budget-related agencies in conjunction with examination of estimates.
- (f) Report on annual reports tabled by 31 October each year by the tenth sitting day of the following year, and on annual reports tabled by 30 April each year by the tenth sitting day after 30 June of that year.
- (g) Draw to the attention of the Senate any significant matters relating to the operations and performance of the bodies furnishing the annual reports.
- (h) Report to the Senate each year whether there are any bodies which do not present annual reports to the Senate and which should present such reports.¹

¹ *Standing orders and other orders of the Senate*, February 2002, pp 27-28. (This Standing Order was amended 24 August 1994, 13 February 1997, 11 November 1998, 3 December 1998 and 13 February 2002).

Requirements and purpose of annual reports

1.2 Annual reports are required to adhere to the *Requirements for Annual Reports* (updated June 2001), issued by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The requirements were approved by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, under subsections 63(2) and 70(2) of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

1.3 The primary purpose of the annual reports of departments is accountability, in particular to the Parliament. Further, annual reports serve to inform the Parliament (through the responsible Minister), other stakeholders, educational and research institutions, the media and the general public about the performance of departments in relation to services provided. They are a key reference document, a document for internal management and form part of the historical record.²

1.4 Requirements for non-statutory authorities are outlined in the *Reporting requirements for the annual reports of non-statutory bodies*, dated 8 December 1987. Statutory authorities whose operations are not similar to departments are to comply with the *Guidelines for the Content, Preparation and Presentation of Annual Reports by Statutory Authorities (1982)*.

Reports dealing with Government Companies

1.5 In its report entitled *Government companies and their reporting requirements* published in November 1989, the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration noted that ‘reporting requirements under companies legislation are less than the requirements faced by Departments and statutory authorities’.³ Notwithstanding this view, the Committee examined these reports in order to establish that comprehensive and useful information has been presented.

1.6 The Committee considers that accountability to Parliament should be the central objective of annual reports and therefore the need for Government companies to comply with the *Reporting requirements for the annual reports of non statutory bodies*.⁴

Timing of presentation of reports

1.7 As stated in Standing Order 25(21)(f), legislation committees are required to report on annual reports tabled by 31 October each year by the tenth sitting day of the following year. Committees are also required to report on annual reports tabled by 30 April each year by the tenth sitting day after 30 June of that year.

2 *Requirements for Annual Reports*, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, May 2000, p.2.

3 Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration, *Government Companies and their reporting requirements*, November 1989, p. 2.

4 Senate. *Hansard*, Vol S.124, 8 December 1987, pp. 2643-5.

Reports referred to the Committee

1.8 This report examines the annual reports referred to the Committee until 18 June 2002.

1.9 During this period 21 reports were referred to the Committee. These reports included:

- 7 statutory authorities;
- 1 non-statutory authority;
- 4 companies and
- 9 other reports not requiring review.

A complete list of the reports referred to the Committee appears at Appendix 1.

General Comments

1.10 In accordance with the Senate Standing Orders, the Committee is required to report to the Senate on whether the reports are ‘apparently satisfactory’. In making this assessment, the Committee considers aspects such as the timeliness of presentation and compliance with relevant reporting guidelines.

1.11 The Committee is pleased to note that most of the annual reports examined adhere to the reporting requirements satisfactorily and have maintained a high standard of presentation. Where relevant, the majority of reports detail programs and activities with a focus on performance measurement against outcomes and goals in relation to forecasts listed in Portfolio Budget Statements.

1.12 The Committee has made individual comments in this report on most of the annual reports examined. Subject to these assessments, the Committee considers that all annual reports examined in this report are ‘apparently satisfactory’.

Reports not examined

1.13 The Committee is not obliged to report on acts, statements of corporate intent, surveys or movement compliance statements. One act, two statements of corporate intent, one survey, one programme report, one selection committee, one movement compliance statement, one national equity and diversity program and one deed agreement were referred to the Committee as follows:

Australian National Residue Survey Results 2000-2001;

Australian Fisheries Management Authority – Selection Committee – 2000-2001;

Roads to Recovery Programme – 2000-2001;

Airservices Australia – National Equity and Diversity Program Progress Report – 2000-2001;

Airservices Australia – Movement Compliance Statement for Sydney Airport for the period 1 July to 30 August 2001;

Maritime Industry Finance Company – Deed of grant between MIFco and Commonwealth for the period 1 July 2001 to 31 December 2001;

Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd – Statement of Corporate Intent 2001-2002 and Sydney Airports Corporation Ltd – Statement of Corporate Intent 2001-2004.

Senator Bill Heffernan
Chair

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

September 2002

CHAPTER 2

ANNUAL REPORTS OF STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio

National Rural Advisory Council

1.14 The annual report of the National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC) for 2000-2001 was tabled in the Senate on 18 June 2002. The report also incorporates a report on the operation of the Rural Adjustment Scheme (RAS). The report provides an overview of the first full year of the Council's operations, since establishment in December 1999. The Council was established as a statutory consultative body following legislative changes to the *Rural Adjustment Act 1992* and replaces the former Rural Adjustment Scheme Advisory Council (RASAC).⁵

1.15 NRAC's annual report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Rural Adjustment Act 1992*.

1.16 The report provides a concise review of the Council's activities and outcomes, including the RAS. All reporting requirements have been met.

Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority

1.17 The Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority annual report for 1999-2000 was tabled in the Senate on 12 February 2002. The report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*.

1.18 The Committee notes that the report is for the 1999-2000 year. Other reporting requirements have been met.

Wheat Export Authority

1.19 The report of the Wheat Export Authority (WEA) for 2000-2001 was tabled in the Senate on 12 February 2002. WEA's annual report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Wheat Marketing Act 1989* and Section 9 of the *CAC Act 1997*.

1.20 The report provides an overview of the Authority's activities. Performance measurement of outputs has been assessed in accordance with the project activities against performance indicators. All reporting requirements have been met.

5 National Rural Advisory Council Annual Report 2000-2001, p. 8.

Transport and Regional Services Portfolio

Australian Maritime College

1.21 The 2000-2001 annual report for the Australian Maritime College (AMC) was tabled in the Senate on 18 June 2002. The report has been prepared in accordance with the *Maritime College Act 1978* and the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*.

1.22 The report details the activities of the college faculties and Corporate Services Division. A report on the AMC's subsidiary, AMC Search Limited, has also been included in the annual report. All reporting requirements have been met.

Casino Surveillance Authority

1.23 The annual report for 2000-2001 was tabled in the Senate on 12 March 2002. The report has been prepared in accordance with Section 42 of the Territory of Christmas Island *Casino Control Ordinance 1988*.

1.24 The Authority's report reiterates from the 1999-2000 report that the casino licence was cancelled on 28 July 1998, resulting in a cessation of operations. The report notes that there has been no operational requirements necessitating a meeting of the Authority. As such, the report states that the Casino Controller has no significant events or operational activities to report for the 2000-2001 financial year.

International Air Services Commission

1.25 The International Air Services Commission annual report for 2000-2001 was tabled in the Senate on 12 February 2002. The report has been submitted in accordance with the *International Air Services Commission Act 1992*.

1.26 The Committee has reviewed the report and considers that all reporting requirements have been met.

Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee

1.27 The 2000-2001 annual report of the Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee (SIFC) was tabled in the Senate on 12 February 2002. The Committee operates in accordance with the *Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee Act 1977*.

1.28 The report notes that the Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee continues to manage the inherited liabilities from its predecessor organisation, the Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority in relation to claims for asbestos-related diseases. As at 30 June 2001, the Committee had received 159 claims for damages.⁶ The financial statements provide details of unquantifiable contingencies related to this. The Committee notes the interim funding arrangements put in place during 2001-2002 to enable the continued operations of SIFC.

6 Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee annual report 2000-2001.

1.29 In terms of report presentation and aids to access, the Committee notes that the report contains no page numbering or table of contents. The Committee considers that these types of access aids are a basic minimum and requests that future reports provide at least these basic aids.

Conclusion

1.30 Apart from Committee comments on the SIFC report, the annual reports of the statutory authorities examined in this report are considered by the Committee to be apparently satisfactory.

CHAPTER 3

ANNUAL REPORTS OF NON STATUTORY AUTHORITIES, GOVERNMENT COMPANIES AND REPORTS DEALING WITH ACTS AND OTHER BODIES

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio

Murray-Darling Basin Commission

1.31 The 2000-2001 annual report of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission was tabled on 18 June 2002. The Commission was established under the *Murray-Darling Basin Agreement 1992* through a legal agreement with the Commonwealth Parliament, the State Parliaments of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland and a memorandum of understanding with the Legislative Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory. As such, the Commission is a unique organisation, owned by the six governments in an effort to ensure effective management of the Murray-Darling river catchments. The report also incorporates the annual report of the Ministerial Council's Community Advisory Committee.

1.32 This report describes the objectives and achievements of the Commission during the 2000-01 financial year. Performance is measured against key areas detailed in the Commission's corporate plan.

1.33 The report provides a well presented and detailed account of the Commission's activities, particularly in relation to natural resource management and water resources. The Commission has met all reporting requirements.

Companies

Landcare Australia Limited

1.34 The Landcare Australia annual report for 2000-2001 was tabled in the Senate on 12 February 2002. Landcare Australia Limited is a Commonwealth owned non-profit company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated on 10 October 1989. Landcare Australia focuses efforts on creating environmental awareness and raising funds.

1.35 Funding is provided through a combination of Commonwealth appropriation and corporate sponsorship. Sponsorship for Landcare activities is often provided through the Landcare Foundation. It is administered jointly by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (AFFA) and Environment Australia.

1.36 The report notes that the 2000-2001 year was one of review, with the development of a new team structure enhancing service capabilities and results with

sponsors. The report provides a concise review of all campaigns and activities generally and in each of the States and Territories.

Transport and Regional Services Portfolio

Companies

Australian Rail Track Corporation Limited

1.37 The 2000-2001 annual report of Australian Rail Track Corporation Limited (ARTC) was tabled in the Senate on 12 February 2002.

1.38 The report provides an overview of the ARTCs activities for the reporting year. During the 2000-2001 year, the ARTC continued to pursue strategies to improve the competitiveness of rail both structurally and operationally. The reporting year was characterised by a number of activities. These included improvement in rail market share on the East West corridor, infrastructure improvements and the development of a program to improve the safety and efficiency of interfaces in Victoria.

Essendon Airport Limited

1.39 The report for Essendon Airport Limited (EAL) was tabled on 13 February 2002. EAL is an unlisted public company owned by the Commonwealth and operates under the *Commonwealth Airports Act 1996* and *Airports (Environment Protection) Regulations 1997*.

1.40 Principal activities for EAL are the provision and management of airport facilities at Essendon Airport and airport related property and commercial operations. The Committee notes EALs comments regarding significant events after the Balance date that the Commonwealth agreed on 10 August 2001 to sell all its shares in EAL.⁷

Maritime Industry Finance Company Limited

1.41 The 2000-2001 annual report was tabled on 12 February 2002. The report was prepared in accordance with the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*.

1.42 The Maritime Industry Finance Company Limited (MIFCo) is a wholly owned Commonwealth company, limited by guarantee. It was established on 8 April 1998. The Company is responsible for facilitating the Government's waterfront reform agenda. The Company's primary function is to fund redundancy related payments to stevedore industry employees who meet eligibility criteria.⁸

7 Essendon Airport Limited Annual Report 2000-2001, p. 3.

8 Maritime Industry Finance Company Limited Annual Report 2000-2001, p. 1.

1.43 The report notes that during the year, MIFCo finalised all claims arising from the stevedore redundancy program. It has funded 1,487 redundancies for a total of \$178,394,473.⁹

Acts

1.44 The Committee received one Act as follows:

- *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* – National Office of Local Government – Report for 2000-2001.

1.45 Under the terms of the procedural order, the Committee is not required to report on Acts. However, the Committee considers the report to be a useful and relevant document.

Conclusion

1.46 The Committee considers that the annual reports of the non-statutory authorities and companies examined in this report are apparently satisfactory.

9 Ibid.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF ANNUAL REPORTS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE DURING THE PERIOD 1 NOVEMBER 2001 TO 30 JUNE 2002 AND DATE OF TABLING IN THE SENATE

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY PORTFOLIO

Date Tabled

Statutory Authorities

- National Rural Advisory Council – Report 2000-2001 18 June 2002
- Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority – Report 1999-2000 12 February 2002
- Wheat Export Authority – Report 2000-2001 12 February 2002

Non-Statutory Bodies

- Murray-Darling Basin Commission – Report 2000-2001 19 June 2002

Companies

- Landcare Australia Limited – Report 2000-2001 12 February 2002

Other

- Australian National Residue Survey – Report 2000-2001 13 February 2002
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority Selection Committee – Report 2000-2001 20 March 2002

TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Statutory Authorities

- Australian Maritime College – Report 2000-2001 18 June 2002
- International Air Services Commission – Report 2000-2001 12 February 2002
- Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee – Report 2000-2001 12 February 2002
- Territory of Christmas Island – Casino surveillance Authority – Report 2000-2001 12 March 2002

Companies

- Australian Rail Track Corporation Limited – Report 2000-2001 12 February 2002
- Essendon Airport Limited – Report 2000-2001 13 February 2002
- Maritime Industry Finance Company Limited – Report 2000-2001 12 February 2002

Acts

- *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* – National Office of Local Government – Report 2000-2001 on the operation of the Act 12 March 2002

Other

- Airservices Australia – Movement compliance Statement for Sydney Airport for the period ending 30 September 2001 19 March 2002
- Airservices Australia – National Equity and Diversity Program 1998-2001 - Progress Report 2000-2001 19 March 2002
- Australian Rail Track Corporation Limited – Statement of Corporate Intent 2001-2002 12 February 2002
- Maritime Industry Finance Company – Report on the Deed of Grant for the period 1 July 2001 to 31 December 2001 20 March 2002
- Roads to Recovery Programme – Report 2000-2001 19 March 2002
- Sydney Airports Corporation Limited – Statement of Corporate Intent – 2001-2004 13 February 2002

