

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005**

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

### **(22) Output: Internal Product**

Senator Murray asked:

ANAO audits for the last three years have revealed a consistently low level of compliance across most agencies with DOFA confidentiality criteria (February 2003) for determining whether commercial information should be protected as confidential. The ANAO's latest report on the Order (No.11 2005-2006, September 2005) states that departments and agencies need to give higher priority with this important requirement of the Senate Order.

- What specific measures have been or will be taken to address this problem, give it higher priority and raise compliance levels?
- What guidance and training are provided to staff about the confidentiality criteria and the four tests employed to determine whether information should be protected?
- What internal auditing or checking is performed to test compliance in this area? If none is performed, why not and is the agency considering the adoption of internal controls and checks?

*Answer:*

### **DIMIA**

The department was included in the ANAO's latest report and has agreed with the ANAO's recommendation that adequate documentation and training material be made available to staff in identifying the specific information in contracts as being confidential.

Supplementary guidance material has been developed to include the confidentiality criteria promulgated by the Department of Finance and Administration. Training will be delivered to departmental staff prior to the preparation of the next Senate Order report.

Additional internal controls will be incorporated into a proposed national contracts register that is integrated with the department's financial management information system which will ensure the completeness and accuracy of the Senate Order listing.

### **RRT**

The standard contract (attached) includes standard clauses on confidentiality. Major contracts are monitored and reviewed by the Deputy Registrar (and the Business Services section). Staff with responsibilities for contract negotiation are expected to seek advice from the Deputy Registrar or the Business Services section for guidance on any variation to standard contract conditions. An internal audit on procurement and contract management is included in the 2005-06 internal audit plan.