

Corporate governance



governance

The Commission's corporate governance framework sets out how the Commission is "governed" to enable it to meet its goals and objectives.

Senior management group

The Commission's senior management group comprises the Commissioner, Executive Director and managers. The Commissioner is responsible for the overall leadership of the Commission.

All managers report directly to either the Commissioner or the Executive Director, who reports to the Commissioner. This group meets fortnightly to consider financial, staffing and managerial priorities, and closely monitors the operations, budget and strategic directions of the Commission.

Internal audit

The internal audits conducted into the Commission's business in 2002-03 aimed to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission's operations. These audits are central to improving accountability and operational efficiency.

During the financial year, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Audit and Evaluation Services Unit conducted an operational review of the Commission's Complaints and Investigations Unit and office security. In addition, recommendations arising from the 2001-02 operational reviews into the Community Visitor program and the Employment Screening Services Unit were implemented this financial year.

Outcomes

These reviews identified a number of recommendations, the majority of which have been implemented, leading to improvements in:

- office security
- processing of data
- reporting and data analysis, and
- accountability in information storage.

A number of recommendations require further resourcing and will be considered as part of the 2003-04 budget allocation process.

External audit

In September 2002, the Queensland Audit Office certified the Commission's 2001-02 financial statements without qualification. No issues requiring further consideration or action were raised.

Protecting personal information

Information Privacy

In accordance with the *Queensland Government's Information Standard 42 – Information Privacy*, the Commission continues to implement its

Information Privacy Plan which was developed in 2001-02. This plan establishes the framework for the collection and handling of personal information by the Commission and ensures the 11 privacy principles outlined in the Standard are appropriately managed.

A Website Privacy Statement was developed and placed on the Commission's website in the 2002-03 financial year, along with the Commission's

Privacy Plan, to inform stakeholders of the Commission's compliance with the Information Privacy Principles. The Commission expects to be privacy-compliant in accordance with the Government's Privacy Policy by September 2003.

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Privacy of data

Client confidentiality will be safeguarded through improved management and storage of data as a result of the implementation of audit recommendations.

Social and environmental responsibility

The Commission is aware of its responsibility to move towards triple bottom line reporting – that is, to report against its social and environmental performance, as well as its economic performance. The Commission has a commitment to ongoing improvements to both social and environmental responsibility, considering them integral to good corporate governance.

Social responsibility

The Commission supports a wide range of community-based programs which contribute to the social capital of the community. Throughout the 2002-03 financial year, the Commission provided opportunities for people to perform community service (through the Community Corrections program). The Commission also provided the opportunity for a number of participants in the Work for the Dole scheme to work at the Commission.

In addition, the Commission has provided opportunities for 3rd and 4th year students studying Human Services degrees to work in the Complaints and Investigations Unit.

The Commission's changes to its Working Hours Arrangements policy show its commitment to flexible work practices.

Environmental responsibility

Recycling

The Commission actively participates in recycling programs which contribute to the management and sustainability of the environment. Programs such as waste paper recycling and toner cartridge recycling have been implemented.

Reduction in paper use

The Commission has reviewed a number of work practices to determine where information technology can be better used to reduce paper and other resource use. In 2003-04, the Commission will implement new databases in the Complaints and Investigations Unit and Community Visitor program. The resulting reduction in reliance of records on paper, the proposed implementation of Crimtrak (an on-line database) for criminal history information checks, together with other process improvements will greatly reduce the use of this resource within the Commission.

Waste minimisation

The Commission's maintenance programs ensure that plant and equipment are properly maintained and operating efficiently to minimise waste.

Procurement policies

The Commission's procurement program for the use of local products takes into account environmental considerations.

Energy use

In the 2002-03 financial year, the Commission's energy consumption was fairly constant. It was not possible to monitor energy consumption trends between financial years due to the Commission's move to new premises in March 2002. However, energy costs will be monitored over the 2003-04 financial year for comparison data.

One area in which the Commission has been able to save energy is through the use of new technology, with upgraded equipment automatically switching to energy saving mode if left on.



Corporate governance enhancements

Improved records management

In January 2003, the Commission outsourced its storage and retrieval of Working with Children Check files to a specialist records management company. Approximately 100,000 files are now stored and recorded, with the Commission retrieving files as required.

New induction program

In 2002-03, the Commission initiated an induction program for new staff. (See staff development.) This program ensures employees are aware of the operations of the Commission, as well as their own accountability and responsibilities.

Improved financial reporting

Continued improvements were made to monthly financial reporting to the Commissioner in 2002-03. Monthly reports now include a broader range of financial information, as well as quarterly performance data against targets outlined in the Ministerial Portfolio Statements.

Legislative changes

In the 2002-03 financial year, the review of Part 6 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000* began as required by the legislation. An external team of officers from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet was appointed to review the Act, with assistance from the Commission's Executive Director and Managers, Policy and Employment Screening Services Unit. The review is expected to be finalised in the 2003-04 financial year.



Risk management and internal controls

Risk management

To adequately manage risks associated with the loss of physical assets and personal liability, the Commission's non-current assets and other risks such as public liability cover are insured through the Queensland Government Insurance Fund, with premiums paid on a risk basis. In addition, the Commission pays premiums to WorkCover Queensland to meet its obligations for employee compensation.

Service level agreements

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet provides a range of corporate services support and systems to the Commission through a service level agreement outlining the services and service standards to be provided. These include:

- a range of financial and human resource management processing
- financial systems (SAP R/3)
- human resource management systems (Aurion)
- IT help desk and facilities management services
- library services
- facilities management and procurement support, and
- other support as required.

From 1 July 2003, the introduction of the Government's Shared Service Provider model means these services will be provided jointly by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Corporate Solutions Queensland and CorpTech. Service level agreements will be negotiated with the appropriate provider of these services.

Improved accountability

In 2002-03, the Commission began developing replacement databases for the Complaints and Investigations and Community Visitor programs. Much work was done on the databases in 2002-03, and they are expected to be fully implemented in 2003-04. The new databases will provide effective collection of data, assisting in improved reporting, identifying trends and supporting planning to inform the delivery of services.

In May 2003, the Commission began an internal review of the processes around the Working with Children Check. As 2002-03 was the first full year of implementation of employment screening of volunteers, employees and self-employed people in specified categories of work, the processing of applications increased by 340% from 2001-02. The review will consider the implementation of emerging technologies and enhancements to the processing model to decrease turnaround times for the issuing of suitability cards for those who pass the working with children check.

Training

In 2002-03, Commission staff attended Workplace Health and Safety Officer training as required under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*, and Workplace Rehabilitation Coordinator training as required under the *WorkCover Queensland Act 1996*.

Review of delegations

To adequately manage the financial and human resources of the Commission, a review was undertaken and appropriate amendments made to financial and human resource services delegations in 2002-03.

Review of performance measures

As 2001-02 was the first full year of operation under the Commission's new Act, performance measures are still being fine tuned. In the 2002-03 year, a number of key performance measures against which the Commission reports were changed, including the turnaround times for the processing of Working with Children Check applications.

Business continuity planning

Work on the Commission's Business Continuity/ Disaster Recovery Plan also began in 2002-03. The plan will outline the activities and management structure required to ensure the Commission remains operational during, and can quickly recover from, a disaster situation. This plan is expected to be finalised in 2003-04.

Asset management

In 2002-03, the Commission continued to upgrade its office equipment in accordance with the capital rollover scheme. In the course of the financial year, the Commission purchased new desktop computers, laptops, printers, digital photocopier and a data projector.

The Commission relies on external data links to access a number of technology resources. To ensure continuity of access, the existing microwave data link was upgraded to laser technology, and a redundant ISDN line was put in place as a back up should the laser link become non-operational.

The purchase and upgrade of the technology and data links ensures staff have access to reliable and efficient technology to support them in delivering consistent and reliable services to the Commission's clients.

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In 2003-04, the Commission's data storage infrastructure will be upgraded through the relocation of data housing to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The Commission will continue to rollover assets, and will go live with the new Complaints Management and Community Visitor databases which began development in the 2002-03 financial year.

Code of conduct

The Commission places great value on public confidence in its operations and seeks to ensure that all employees exhibit high standards of ethical behaviour. The Commission's Code of Conduct was developed in 2001 and is continually reviewed to ensure its relevance. All staff are provided a copy of the Code of Conduct when they join the Commission.