How is the assessment process progressing?

Ministers are assessing more than 160 Australian Government agencies against the Uhrig governance principles and templates.

The assessment process is proceeding on a rolling basis and the Government anticipates that all assessments will be drafted by 31 March 2006. The implementation of any improvements arising from the assessment process will also be progressed on a rolling basis, and will continue through 2006.

As announced on 5 January 2006 by the Minister for Finance and Administration, Senator the Hon Nick Minchin, at the end of 2005 more than 36 percent of assessments have been completed, and a further 25 percent of assessments are well advanced.

Assessments are currently at one of seven stages:

1. **Assessments completed and implementation concluded.** For example, the new governance arrangements for Medicare Australia (formerly the Health Insurance Commission) and Centrelink commenced on 1 October 2005. The governing boards have been wound up and executive management has been introduced, as proposed by the Uhrig Review, for bodies with service provision functions. Both agencies are now subject to the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.
   - Statements of Expectations were issued by the Minister for Human Services to Centrelink and Medicare Australia on 27 October 2005:

2. **Assessments completed and outcomes announced.** For example:
   - the then Minister for Education, Science and Training, The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, announced on 15 July 2005 that the Australian Research Council would move to executive management;
   - the Minister for Health and Ageing, The Hon Tony Abbott MP, announced on 7 September 2005 that the National Health and Medical Research Council would also move to executive management; and
   - the Minister for Finance and Administration, Senator the Hon Nick Minchin, noted on 5 January 2006 that the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) would also move to executive management.

3. **Assessments completed and no change to governance arrangements considered necessary.** There will be no change to the governance of AusAID, Australia Post, the Australian Public Service Commission, the Australian National Audit Office,
Geoscience Australia, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, IP Australia, the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman, the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General and the Reserve Bank of Australia.

4. **Assessments completed, and Statements of Expectation and Intent to be introduced.** Responsible ministers will issue Statements of Expectation to, and receive Statements of Intent from, the Australian Communications and Media Authority, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the Australian Electoral Commission, the Australian Industry Development Corporation, the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, the Australian River Company Limited, the Australian Taxation Office, the Commonwealth Grants Commission, the Corporations and Markets Advisory Committee, the CSS and PSS Boards, the Dairy Adjustment Authority, Film Finance Corporation Australia, the National Australia Day Council, the National Blood Authority, the National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority, the Office of National Assessments, the Productivity Commission, the Social Security Appeals Tribunal, the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, and the Albury Wodonga Development Corporation (AWDC). The AWDC will also be covered by the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* for the first time.

5. **Assessments currently being prepared or under consideration by Ministers.**

6. **Assessments due to commence shortly** (as per the rolling nature of the schedule).

7. **Assessments to be undertaken as part of a wider review processes.** For example, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, announced a review of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on 23 August 2005.

**Who can I contact if I require further information?**

Portfolio bodies should liaise with their respective departments in the first instance for advice regarding the assessment process.


**Other developments**

The Uhrig governance principles also fully inform the policy document, *Governance Arrangements for Australian Government Bodies*, released by the Department of Finance and Administration (Finance) in August 2005.

The aim of the document is to promote consistency in the governance arrangements of Australian Government bodies, while reinforcing the principles set out in the Uhrig Review. This is in line with Finance’s ongoing role of promoting better practice governance of Australian Government bodies generally.

The policies set out in the document provide a strong platform for informed discussion when officials consult with, or seek advice from, central agencies on the merits of alternative structures for Australian Government bodies. Early consultation with Finance is strongly encouraged to assist in designing better and more sustainable governance solutions.

Departments should liaise on these issues with Finance as early as practicable to ensure that the governance arrangements promote the effective implementation of policy.