Welcome to the first edition of the Governance Implementation Update. Updates will be issued on an ad hoc basis to inform agencies of key milestones and to address implementation issues. Any suggestions for topics to be addressed in future Updates are most welcome.

Government response to the Uhrig Review


How will the Uhrig Review recommendations be implemented?

Coordination

The Minister for Finance and Administration (‘Finance Minister’) has a coordination, facilitation and monitoring role in implementing the Government response. He is supported in this role by the Department of Finance and Administration (Finance).

A small working group of departments has been established to assist Finance. A broader reference group comprising the remaining departments provides additional input.

Role of Ministers and their departments

Ministers have scheduled their portfolio bodies for assessment by March 2006. Ministers will assess bodies against the governance templates with the assistance and support of their departments, who will undertake and complete assessments, including consulting with portfolio bodies during the assessment process.

IMPORTANT

The assessment process is led by ministers. It is not one of self assessment by the body.

Assessments must be received by the Finance Minister, after discussion with Finance, no later than the scheduled date.

Due to the limited time available to complete all assessments there is very limited scope to change assessment deadlines set by ministers. Any change would require the agreement of the portfolio and Finance Ministers.

The Finance Minister will consider the outcomes of assessments to ensure a consistent and robust approach is taken to the application of the Uhrig principles.

The Finance Minister also receives six-monthly reports from portfolio ministers. The first is due by 31 March 2005.

The role of the Department of Finance and Administration

Finance is available to assist departments in preparing assessments and to brief portfolio bodies on the Uhrig Report, the Government response and the process for undertaking assessments and implementing the outcomes.
Which portfolio bodies will need to be assessed?

- Statutory authorities and office holders;
- Commonwealth companies that are not government business enterprises;
- Agencies prescribed under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 (FMA Act) that are not statutory authorities or office holders; and
- Other bodies deemed appropriate by portfolio ministers

What guidance will Finance provide?

Guidance material has been developed by Finance in consultation with departments and is available from portfolio department contacts. The material is not intended to definitively cover all issues that departments may encounter in the implementation process. Rather it aims to provide an overview and suggests a process to assist departments in supporting their ministers.

Further guidance material on particular stages of the assessment and reporting processes, and on particular issues, will be developed on a rolling basis.

Governance Implementation Updates will also be issued from time to time, informing departments and portfolio bodies of relevant issues and changes concerning the implementation process. The Updates may be downloaded at www.finance.gov.au/governancestructures.

What is the timetable for the implementation process?

Bodies will be assessed on a rolling basis from December 2004 through to March 2006 as scheduled by ministers. Other key milestones are:

- 31 March 2005: Assessments of the eight bodies considered in the Uhrig Report to be completed. 1st six-monthly report on progress to be provided by portfolio ministers to the Finance Minister.
- 31 March 2006: Completion of assessment of all portfolio bodies. 3rd six-monthly report on progress due.
- 31 March 2007: Improvements agreed to by portfolio ministers to be completed. Final report on progress due.

Who can I contact if I require further information?

Finance will be providing support and assistance to departments in implementing the Government’s response. Portfolio bodies should liaise with their respective departments in the first instance about the assessment process.

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