



# Chapter 8

**Enabling Our Business**

Achievement of the department's outcomes and key deliverables is supported by the work of enabling areas in the department. Enabling areas and cross-policy groups include the Corporate Strategy Group, the Information Services Group, the Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Group, the Procurement, Assurance and Legal Group and the Audit and Investigations Branch. Details of the work carried out by these areas can be found in Chapters 7 and 8.

## 'OPEN FOR BUSINESS'

### DEST's Open for Business philosophy

*Open for Business* is vital for the department. It underpins our relationship with each other and our stakeholders. It is about moving towards genuine partnership arrangements so that together we achieve our vision of *a better future for all Australians through learning, science and innovation*.

We aim to foster a culture of openness and collaborative partnerships. To reach our common goals we need to demonstrate professionalism, leadership and a participatory, mutual way of working which balances accountability with accessibility, and confidentiality with inclusiveness.

*Open for Business* means that our relationships and behaviours are characterised by five principles. In working towards a shared vision we are willing to:

- pursue mutual benefits
- cooperate and collaborate
- be outcome oriented
- share information and knowledge
- be interdependent (that is, both have something to gain or lose should the partnership succeed or fail).

### Stakeholder relationships

The *Open for Business Stakeholder Charter* explains the department's commitment to key external stakeholders.

In 2004–05, the department supported its ongoing commitment to stakeholder relationships by:

- redeveloping its external website in consultation with stakeholders to make the site more accessible and user friendly
- conducting a second stakeholder survey to monitor and maintain sound collaborative relationships with a wide range of external stakeholders
- developing a customer relationship management database to manage departmental contact with stakeholders and to facilitate regular communication with them
- promoting improved *Open for Business* approaches to group and business plans.

## Service Charter

The department's *Service Charter* explains service commitments and standards. The charter, reviewed periodically, aims to:

- promote a strong client focus within the department
- establish clear service commitments to and standards for clients
- increase accountability for the way the department delivers its programmes and services.

**Table 8.1: Service charter performance information**

Service charter	2004–05	2003–04
Number of telephone calls to the service charter line	24 185	6866
Number of emails to the service charter contact	654	772
Complaints about the department's service	3	4
Time taken to answer telephone calls to the service charter line	10 seconds	6 seconds

*Source: Department of Education, Science and Training.*

The significant increase in the number of calls to the service charter line in 2004-05 reflects the increase in programmes and initiatives being offered by the department as a result of the October 2004 machinery of government changes.

In 2005, the department commissioned market research to advance its *Open for Business* commitment. The research aimed to measure performance since the last survey in 2002 and explored the multi-level relationships the department has with stakeholders. The research, conducted between March and June 2005, showed that stakeholders are very satisfied with their overall relationship with the department:

- Satisfaction remains high, increasing from 83 per cent in 2002 to 85 per cent in 2005. Stakeholders appreciate the effort they feel has been directed towards strengthening relationships in recent years, pointing to the department's openness, willingness to listen and responsiveness as key features of this development.
- Compared to findings reported in 2002, changes to the way the department conducts business with stakeholders are having a positive impact. As a reason for contact, 'networking or general discussion' rose from last place (five per cent in 2002) to first place (76 per cent in 2005). This suggests that the department's efforts to encourage closer links and engage in dialogue with stakeholders are appreciated.
- As a whole, stakeholders think that the information the department provides is readily available, reliable and useful. The department's responsiveness to requests for information appears to be widely appreciated, and face-to-face contact through forums and meetings is seen to be highly effective.

## WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT

*Working whole of government<sup>27</sup> is vital for the continuing success of the portfolio; indeed broader relationships across government are the key to improving policy outcomes in all portfolios (Lisa Paul, Secretary).*

The department is working both internally and externally to achieve whole of government goals and successes. Throughout the department, many people are working in groups (inter-departmental committees and teams formed from representatives of one or more agencies) to achieve departmental and government outcomes. The department also continues to be intrinsically involved in the implementation of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) Report: *Connecting Government* recommendations both internally and across government.

One of the key findings of the report was the need to establish a whole of government website. This website (*Connected Government*)<sup>28</sup> was developed by the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO), under the guidance of the Deputy Secretaries Group for whole of government, and will be launched in mid-August 2005. The group that developed the site comprised representatives from the department, AGIMO, the Australian Public Service Commission, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Transport and Regional Services and Centrelink.

Whole of government continues to be a high priority. The department has a strong track record in whole of government work, including involvement in developing and implementing the government's science and innovation policy (*Backing Australia's Ability*) and playing a lead role in the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) trials in the Murdi Paaki region in north western NSW.

The department has begun the implementation of an internal *Whole of Government Capability Development Strategy*, to increase staff awareness of the whole of government agenda, and to enhance the capability of staff to work in a whole of government way. This strategy outlines the department's commitment to and direction for, the whole of government agenda for the next 12 months.

## SERVICES TO OUR MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENT

In 2004–05 the department continued to support its commitment to provide the best services to the two Ministers and the new Parliamentary Secretary.

The volume of ministerial correspondence continued to increase with the number finalised in 2004–05 around 30 per cent higher than in 2003–04 (see Figure 8.1). The total number of ministerial briefings finalised in 2004–05 was 2943, which consisted of 1079 briefs requested by the Ministers and 1864 initiated by the department (see Figure 8.2). This figure was 5 per cent lower than in 2003–04 (3096 briefings, of which 1258 briefs were requested by the Ministers and 1838 were initiated by the department).

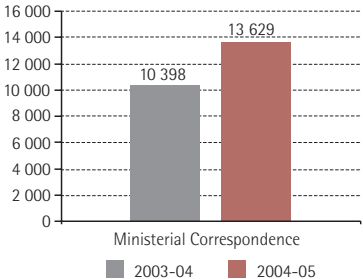
<sup>27</sup> Definition: Whole of government denotes public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues. Approaches can be formal and informal. They can focus on policy development, programme management and service delivery. Management Advisory Committee Report: *Connecting Government*.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.connected.gov.au>

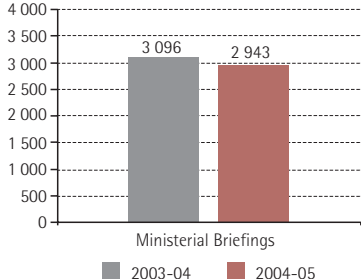
The number of Parliamentary questions in 2004–05 decreased by 28 per cent (see Figure 8.3). However 74 of the 107 questions asked contained multiple parts.

The number of Senate Estimate questions decreased by 14 per cent (see Figure 8.4). The decrease is partly explained by the fact that there were only two hearings of the Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee in 2004–05, whereas there were three hearings in the previous year. Furthermore, tallying the number of Senate questions asked does not always reflect the complexity associated with answering the questions. For example, the 310 questions asked in the Budget Estimates hearing contained 1083 parts.

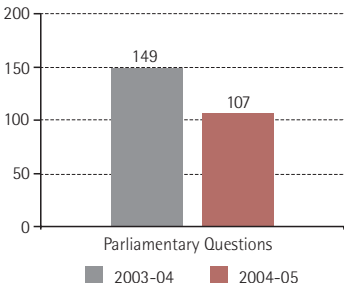
**Figure 8.1: Services to the Ministers— Ministerial Correspondence**



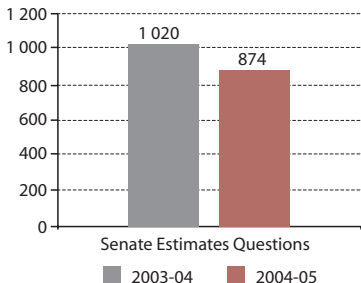
**Figure 8.2: Services to the Ministers— Briefings**



**Figure 8.3: Parliamentary questions**



**Figure 8.4: Senate Estimates questions**



Source: Department of Education, Science and Training.

The level of ministerial satisfaction with the briefings provided by the department remains high, with the department exceeding its targets in the three key areas of presentation, quality and timeliness (see Table 8.2).

**Table 8.2: Ministerial satisfaction with briefings (total for department)**

Performance measure	2003–04 Actual	2004–05 Planned	2004–05 Actual
Minister’s satisfaction with:			
– Presentation	92%	90%	96%
– Timeliness	98%	90%	98%
– Quality	99%	90%	96%

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training.

This year the department significantly surpassed its target for timeliness in preparing ministerial correspondence and responding to Parliamentary questions (see Table 8.3)

**Table 8.3: Ministerial and Parliamentary services (total for department)**

Performance measure	2003–04 Actual	2004–05 Planned	2004–05 Actual
Timeliness of responses to Parliamentary questions and Ministerial correspondence	92%	90%	99%

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training.

## STATE AND DISTRICT OFFICE NETWORK

The State Office Network consists of metropolitan offices in all state capitals along with 40 District Offices, of which 15 are co-located with the Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) Network. In addition, the department has established a presence in a further seven ICC locations where it had no previous presence. In total the department has 54 offices (seven in capital cities, 40 District Offices and seven new locations).

ICCs were introduced from 1 July 2004 following the Prime Minister's announcement of major reforms to the way Australian Government services will be delivered to Indigenous Australians. The reforms saw the introduction of a whole of government approach to the provision of these services. ICs are the regional and remote offices established to ensure effective coordination of programme design and service delivery to Indigenous Australians at the regional and local level.

More than 300 staff, including a significant proportion of Indigenous staff, work in the department's State and District Office Network. The Network plays a vital role in the department's policy and programme implementation through its strong client interface and links to state education and training bodies, education providers and community and industry groups. The network is mainly involved, through direct interaction with clients and service providers, in the delivery of Indigenous education, vocational and technical education and career and youth transitions programmes.

The network also plays a role in providing National Office with information about state government activities in education, science and training and contributes to policy and programme development by ensuring issues that impact on local operations are known to National Office. The Network has links with stakeholders, such as state government agencies and other Australian Government agencies represented outside Canberra.

In March 2005, the Secretary formally announced the *Review of the State and District Office Network*. In announcing the review, the Secretary reflected on the significant changes affecting the network in recent times, including the new ICC arrangements, changes to Indigenous education programmes and new Australian Government initiatives, such as the Australian Technical Colleges.

The review process involved wide consultation with stakeholders, national and state office managers and state and district office staff.

## PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Effective people management is crucial to the achievement of the department's business. The People and Leadership Committee (see Figure 7.1) provides advice and support on the direction of people management strategies in the department.

### Rewarding excellence

The department's aspiration to be 'the best of the best' is being achieved in many areas. The department acknowledges and celebrates people's successes.

In the Australia Day Honours Lists, Dr Evan Arthur was awarded a Public Service Medal in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the development of the Australian Research and Education Network. Dr Arthur led this highly innovative project, bringing together numerous and varied stakeholders across the higher education and research sectors and state and territory governments.



*Dr Evan Arthur, Group Manager of the Innovation and Research Systems Group, receives his Public Service Medal from John Landy, AC, MBE, Administrator of the Commonwealth of Australia, at Government House in Canberra.*

A number of departmental staff were recipients of the Australia Day Achievement Medallion in recognition of their outstanding service and excellent contribution to the department and through their work, to the Australian community. They were Mr Noel Simpson, Mr Murray Judd, Ms Liz Taylor and Dr Sheel Nuna (who is one of the 77 locally engaged staff employed in the department's International Network).

The National Archives congratulated the department's records management team for work on the DEST Records Policy. A letter from the Archives' Director-General applauded the department for setting the standard among the APS in the area of records management.

### Delivering human resource services

A number of fundamental human resource services underpin the department's people management strategies. These include payroll, recruitment, accommodation and security services. A number of strategies and initiatives to develop and support staff are in place so people can achieve their potential and the department is able to deliver its business outcomes.

People management strategies are built on evidence and analysis drawn from a number of sources including workforce planning, the staff survey, and internal and external benchmarking of key performance indicators. This information allows the department to identify areas of best practice, or of concern, and to develop effective strategies.

Another source of information and analysis is the *Manager one Removed* (MoR) programme. The MoR programme provides the opportunity for staff to meet with their manager's manager to discuss their future potential and career path options. Manager one Removed enables dialogue about a broad range of career development options and choices. The programme forms part of the Performance Management Framework and is an important part of succession planning.

## Workforce planning

Over the past four years, the department has undertaken workforce planning to ensure that the organisation has the capability it needs to deliver its business now and into the future.

Staff from the People Management Branch meet annually with business groups (as part of the annual business planning process) to discuss workforce planning needs and the implications of each Group's business priorities and future directions. Managers bring to these discussions an understanding of their business goals and knowledge of their current people through the individual performance management and career development processes, *360 Degree Feedback* and MoR programmes, and their Group's staff survey results. To facilitate this process, the People Management Branch produces demographic data on the Group's existing workforce and frames the discussion around identified demand and supply issues and any workforce gaps. Strategies are then formulated to help the Group plan its workforce to achieve its required level of capability over the short to medium term.

Staff surveys were conducted during 2004-05. The department remains in the top 25 per cent of organisations benchmarked for 'employee engagement'<sup>29</sup> and has created new public sector benchmark highs for 'local leadership'<sup>30</sup> and 'working together'<sup>31</sup>. Commitment to the APS Values and having a favourable work environment were identified as key departmental strengths, while wellbeing, which includes people treating each other with respect, was also important. The management of underperformance was the key area to be addressed.

This information is used at an organisational level to identify trends and develop department wide strategies for improving workforce capability and the delivery of the department's outcomes.

Table 8.4 shows that the department had 2014 employees at 30 June 2005.<sup>32</sup>

Key features of the department's workforce in 2004-05 include:

- Executive Level 1 and DEST Level 2 (APS Level 4-5) classifications remain the largest with 28 per cent and 26 per cent of employees at these levels, respectively (see Table 8.4).
- The department has a high proportion (62 per cent) of female employees. This is a small increase (one per cent) on 2003-04 (see Table 8.4).

<sup>29</sup> Employee engagement measures staff satisfaction, motivation, commitment to work and advocacy.

<sup>30</sup> Local leadership measures whether supervisors are available, approachable, listen and respond and follow through for their staff.

<sup>31</sup> Working together measures whether people have adequate information to do their job, are involved in teamwork, have their area and other work areas respond to each others' needs, work well with other departments and have open and effective communications and consultations across DEST.

<sup>32</sup> Tables 8.4 to 8.8 do not include Qwestacon staffing numbers. Information for Qwestacon is provided in Chapter 6.

- The department has a large representation of women at senior levels (55 per cent and 57 per cent of Executive and Senior Executive levels, respectively). The proportion of female Executive Level staff rose from 54 per cent in 2003-04, while the proportion of females in the SES remained about the same (see Table 8.4).
- The proportion of part-time employees has increased to 8.2 per cent from 7.8 per cent in 2003-04 (see Table 8.5).
- There has been a small decrease in the proportion of state-based employees, with 17 per cent (343 people) based outside the national office compared to 20 per cent in 2003-04.
- The department had around the same number of employees based overseas as it did in the previous year (see Table 8.6).

Table 8.4 shows that the department's employee numbers increased by around 10.5 per cent during 2004-05 (from 1823 employees at 30 June 2004).

**Table 8.4: DEST employees by classification**

Classification	at 30 June 2005			at 30 June 2004		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Secretary	0	1	1	1	0	1
Public Office Holder	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
SES Band 3	3	1	4	2	2	4
SES Band 2	9	5	14	7	5	12
SES Band 1	17	33	50	16	26	42
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>58</b>
Executive Level 2	134	119	253	117	95	212
Executive Level 1	231	334	565	202	278	480
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>692</b>
DEST Level 3	172	273	445	151	246	397
DEST Level 2	145	378	523	151	333	484
DEST Level 1	31	74	105	36	96	132
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>1073</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>1013</b>
DEST Legal Officers	9	10	19	10	10	20
DEST Public Affairs Officers	0	1	1	0	1	1
DEST Graduates	10	11	21	12	10	22
DEST Cadets	2	6	8	2	4	6
DEST New Apprentices	3	2	5	3	6	9
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>1112</b>	<b>1823</b>

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training.

Notes:

- Employee numbers are based on actual data as at 30 June 2005. People temporarily performing duties at a higher level (higher duties) on that date (for example to cover short-term absences due to leave or temporarily filling vacancies) are counted at that temporary level rather than at their substantive classification level. Inoperative employees are counted in the figures (for example people on leave without pay).
- Staffing figures reported in the financial statements and outcome resource tables reflect the full time equivalent (FTE) rather than actual headcount.
- The SES Band 2 total includes four SES Band 1 employees temporarily performing duties at this level.
- The SES Band 1 total includes 14 Executive Level 2 employees temporarily performing duties in the Senior Executive Service.

**Table 8.5: DEST employees by employment status**

Employment category	at 30 June 2005			at 30 June 2004		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<b>Ongoing</b>						
Full-time	688	992	1680	645	892	1537
Part-time	19	125	144	14	111	125
Subtotal	707	1117	1824	659	1003	1662
<b>Non-ongoing</b>						
Full-time	51	117	168	47	97	144
Part-time	8	14	22	5	12	17
Subtotal	59	131	190	52	109	161
<b>Total</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>1112</b>	<b>1823</b>

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training.

**Table 8.6: DEST employees by location**

Location	at 30 June 2005			at 30 June 2004		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
New South Wales	33	61	94	35	68	103
Victoria	14	27	41	16	31	47
Queensland	21	57	78	22	60	82
Western Australia	18	29	47	19	23	42
South Australia	11	21	32	12	26	38
Australian Capital Territory	636	1021	1657	576	865	1441
Tasmania	5	7	12	6	8	14
Northern Territory	19	20	39	17	26	43
Overseas	9	5	14	8	5	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>1112</b>	<b>1823</b>

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training.

Table 8.7 shows that 316 people separated from the department between 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2005. This represents an increase from 2003-04, when 291 people separated. Of the people who separated in 2004-05, 138 were non-ongoing employees whose contracts expired, 71 transferred to another agency, eight retired and 98 left for a variety of other reasons.

**Table 8.7: Separations by level**

Level	Number
DEST New Apprentice	1
DEST Cadet	1
DEST Graduate	1
DEST Level 1	70
DEST Level 2	101
DEST Level 3	58
DEST Legal Officer	3
Executive Level 1 (EL1)	51
Executive Level 2 (EL2)	27
Senior Executive Service	1
Secretary	1
Public Office Holder	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>316</b>

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training.

Note: Employee numbers are based on actual data. People who were temporarily performing duties at a higher level (higher duties) at the time of separation are counted in their temporary performance rather than their substantive classification level.

## Learning and development

The department continued to focus its learning and development strategy on leadership at all levels and capability development to support organisational performance. Key activities included:

- targeted development which focused on financial management, policy and whole of government work, communication skills and contract management capabilities
- continued redevelopment of the department's orientation/induction programme
- continued integration of entry level recruitment and development and broader workforce planning
- implementation of Indigenous recruitment and development strategies building on the department's achievements as one of the largest employers of Indigenous Australians in the Australian Public Service (almost 10 per cent of staff as at 30 June 2005)
- completion of the accredited *Training for the Indigenous Education Network* programme.

The department actively supports NAIDOC week. NAIDOC means National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee. NAIDOC week is celebrated annually and provides an opportunity for Australia's Indigenous people to display the richness of their culture and heritage to the rest of the Australian community. The Secretary's NAIDOC Excellence Awards are made to individuals and teams who demonstrate commitment and achievement for Indigenous clients and staff.



*Richard Hooper of the Queensland Training and Vocational Pathways Branch (with Peter Whitney, State Manager), recipient of the Secretary's NAIDOC Excellence Award for demonstrating strong leadership in the Indigenous New Apprenticeship Working Group and innovation in developing the Programme Mapping Tool in Queensland.*

In addition, the department continued to improve the capability of our leaders at all levels through:

- internal leadership development programmes that support behaviours consistent with the department's leadership protocol and *Open for Business* principles, such as the *Leadership Imperative for Tomorrow (LIFT)* Programme for Executive Level 1 staff
- an SES conference and speaker series designed to improve communication across peer groups and to develop shared understanding of, and commitment to, organisational priorities
- participation in external leadership programmes providing opportunities for organisational renewal and enhanced links with other organisations and stakeholders, including:
  - the Australian and New Zealand School of Government *Executive Fellows* and *Executive Master of Public Administration* Programmes
  - the Australian Public Service Commission's *Career Development Assessment Centres*
  - the Australian Public Service Commission's *Leadership in the APS – an Indigenous Experience* Programme
  - the Australian Public Service Commission's *Leading Australia's Future in Asia* study tour.

New initiatives during the year to support the strategy included:

- a 360° feedback programme for SES and Executive Level 2 staff
- the extension of executive coaching support to Executive Level 2 staff
- tailored learning and development consultancy services for specific groups and branches.

## Competitive remuneration and conditions

Industrial agreements (Certified Agreements and Australian Workplace Agreements) underpin the department's workplace relations framework and support its goal of making the department an attractive place to work for current and future employees by providing competitive remuneration and working conditions.

*Stay Here and Grow: DEST Certified Agreement 2002–2005*, the department's current Certified Agreement (CA), expires on 12 December 2005. The focus of the CA has been to help foster a working environment and employee framework that supports creativity, innovation and achievement. This focus has positioned the department as an employer of choice.

Australian Workplace Agreements provide a flexible platform through which remuneration and terms and conditions of employment can be adapted to suit individual circumstances.

In 2005, the department's graduates were offered Australian Workplace Agreements that provide for accelerated advancement based on performance after completion of the graduate year.

The existing Senior Executive (SES) Australian Workplace Agreements expired on 30 June 2005. Development of replacement SES Agreements is underway. A key focus of the department's SES and Executive Level 2 Australian Workplace Agreements is performance based salary advancement with performance assessment against both business outcomes and leadership behaviours.

At 30 June 2005, the department had 278 Australian Workplace Agreements in place, of which 55 were at SES level, 189 at Executive Level 2, and 34 at other non-SES levels. The remaining employees are covered by the department's Certified Agreement.

Table 8.8 provides salary ranges for SES (notional only) and non-SES employees.

**Table 8.8: DEST salary ranges**

Notional salary ranges for SES employees at 30 June 2005	
SES Band 3	\$160 000 - \$200 000
SES Band 2	\$120 000 - \$160 000
SES Band 1	\$90 000 - \$135 000
Salary ranges for non-SES employees at 30 June 2005	
Executive Level 2 (EL2) <sup>a</sup>	\$82 442 - \$104 000
Executive Level 1 (EL1) <sup>a</sup>	\$70 839 - \$81 000
DEST Level 3 (APS 6)	\$55 301 - \$61 759
DEST Level 2 (APS 5)	\$49 949 - \$52 785
DEST Level 2 (APS 4)	\$45 977 - \$48 587
DEST Level 1 (APS 3)	\$40 896 - \$43 218
DEST Level 1 (DEST graduates)(APS 2)	\$36 620 - \$39 783
DEST Level 1 (APS 1) <sup>b</sup>	\$32 053 - \$34 821
New Apprentice (APS 1) <sup>b</sup>	\$25 643 - \$27 857

SES – Senior Executive Service; APS – Australian Public Service

<sup>a</sup> Notional salary range

<sup>b</sup> An APS 1 salary reduces on a pro rata basis for employees below 21 years of age.

Source: Department of Education, Science and Training.

The range of benefits, other than base salary, provided to employees during 2004-05 included:

- performance pay for SES employees
- an executive vehicle for SES employees
- School Holiday Care Allowance for non-SES employees (limited to \$100 per family per week)
- a Transition Bonus of \$1500 for New Apprentices who successfully complete their work-based training programme
- studies assistance – reimbursement of up to half of study related costs (limited to \$1200 per semester)
- a Health Related Allowance of \$200 for health and related activities or items
- First Aid Allowance of \$20 per fortnight.

### **Performance pay**

Fifty-seven SES employees received performance pay during 2004-05, based on assessments relating to the 2003-04 performance cycle. Payments totalling \$496 421 were made, comprising \$312 440 for SES Band 1 and \$183 981 for SES Bands 2 and 3. Individual payments ranged between 2.5 per cent and 15 per cent.

Twenty-nine Executive Level 1 employees received performance pay during 2004-05, based on assessments relating to the 2003-04 performance cycle. This number includes people acting at Executive Level 2 for a period of more than three months in the 2003-04 performance cycle. Payments totalling \$123 318 were made. Individual payments ranged between 5 per cent and 10 per cent. These payments are significantly less than those made in 2003-04 as the Executive Level 2 Australian Workplace Agreements arrangements no longer provide for performance pay in the form of a performance bonus.

### **Safe and equitable workplace**

The department has in place policies and strategies to ensure a safe and equitable workplace for all. These include the Occupational Health and Safety Policy and the Disability Strategy, detailed information which can be found in the Appendices.



*The department receives accreditation from the Australian Breastfeeding Association as an employer supporting nursing mothers in the workplace. From left to right: Ms Deborah Barlow (ACT/Southern NSW President of the Australian Breastfeeding Association), Ms Sally Eldridge (National Coordinator for the Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Accreditation Program from the Australian Breastfeeding Association), Ms Leigh Wood (People Management Branch), Dr Jeff Harmer (previous DEST Secretary), Mr Ewen McDonald (Group Manager, Corporate Strategy Group) and Mr Arthur Townsend (Branch Manager, People Management Branch).*

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

The primary role of the Information Services Group is managing the delivery of information and communications technology services for the department. This spans infrastructure, business applications development and support, telephony, and information management. During 2004-05, this included:

- the delivery of new initiatives flowing from 2004 federal election commitments, in particular delivery of systems support for the *Investing in Our Schools*, and Australian Technical Colleges programmes
- support provided for the transfer of knowledge, training of vocational and technical education staff and the transfer ANTA business systems to the DEST environment
- systems to support higher education reform
- establishing infrastructure for Indigenous Coordination Centres
- strengthening support for Australia's education and research presence overseas
- enhancement of corporate systems and the enactment of records-keeping policy and instructions for corporate administrative records.

The department's *Information Technology Strategic Plan 2004-07* was approved. The plan establishes the Information Services Group's strategies, objectives and key initiatives across three major themes: e-Government (the online delivery of government services);

knowledge and information management; and information technology governance. The plan encapsulates the continuing and emerging challenges in delivering information and communications technology services and serves as a blueprint to guide decision making about investments in people, processes, technology and architecture.

Information and communications technology is a major contributor to the department's performance, supporting both programme delivery and corporate operations. Major contributions to programme performance across 2004-05 have included:

- development and delivery of systems to support the allocation of student numbers (CHESSN) and payments to universities, and the *Going to Uni* website as a part of the *Higher Education Information Management System* work programme
- strengthening support for the overseas counsellor network, and extending product coverage and language support of our international online presence, the AEI Online shop
- implementation completed of the e-business system to support the *Cooperative Research Centres* programme
- enhanced IT support for interactions between the department and state training authorities
- redevelopment of the department's internet presence following an extensive review focusing on information accessibility.

Improvements to corporate operations in 2004-05 included:

- introduction of records-keeping policy and instructions, resulting in strengthening of the department's records-keeping practices
- replacement of the 'desktop' for Questacon staff and the Ministers' offices
- introducing filing of Email (through DiREct) and the automatic archiving of Email
- development of an *IT Disaster Recovery Plan*
- strengthening of information technology security arrangements and capabilities through the enterprise IT security architecture.

The Records Management Unit won an outstanding team award in the Records Management Association of Australia's J. Eddis Linton Awards for Excellence in Records Management – the peak national records management industry award.

Information Services Group continued its programme of operational performance assessment. Reviews of IT governance process maturity and project portfolio management maturity were conducted and reported to the Audit and Business Assurance Committee and the Corporate Information Technology Committee. The outcomes of these reviews are guiding the Group's governance process improvement programmes. The department undertook a further round of the IT User Satisfaction Survey (a multi-agency, longitudinal survey of service quality and satisfaction sentiment) and maintained its high satisfaction ratings.

## CASE STUDY: Management of IT Security

DEST's IT Security Section is an innovative service related body that has been transformed from the small reactive body it was back in early 2004. The Director of IT Security, Glenn Peisley, has no doubt that bringing back into the department the previously outsourced IT security function has had many positive results, including greater cost efficiency and accountability and a much quicker response time.

Glenn believes one of the most interesting results of DEST's control of its own IT security has been the innovation which has developed. For example, DEST now has an in-house forensics capability that can capture computer based fraud against the Commonwealth, and unacceptable use of departmental resources. In March 2005, members of the IT Security team presented a detailed case study of a recent experience to the Australian High Technology Crime Centre.

DEST's IT Security has become an important player in the computer forensics area. Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) invited the Section to co-develop, with other major Government and industry groups, an Advanced Diploma in Computer Forensics course to meet industry needs. The course has become one of CIT's more popular IT courses.

All of these developments illustrate the positive networking that has been taking place between the department and major players like the Australian Federal Police, NSW Computer Forensics and the Australian Taxation Office.

A recent report from the Australian National Audit Office on DEST's IT security has indicated that we are doing very well indeed.

The department received recognition for its competence in information and communications technology governance during 2004-05; the Australian Graduate School of Management commissioned a substantial case study of the *Improved Value Realisation* initiative for inclusion in its Executive MBA programme.

Progress towards the final separation of the department's IT infrastructure platforms from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations continued. The acquisition of facilities is nearing completion, preliminary testing has commenced and the transition of services is planned for September 2005.

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Group supports policy and programme development in the department. The Group plays a key role in supporting and carrying out research, analysis and evaluation.

During 2004-05, the Group undertook substantial research and analysis activity relating to students and youth, transitions, attrition rates in universities, schools and teachers, and made a contribution to a number of international studies. The Group is also responsible for a range of cross sectoral policy matters including welfare reform and income support, adult learning, demographic and mature age issues and regional issues. In addition it is also responsible for a range of cross portfolio issues related to productivity, performance and investment in education and training.

Major evaluations and reviews have been undertaken during this period including the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme, the New Apprenticeships Evaluation and a review of ABSTUDY. In addition, a major audit of science, engineering and technology skills was conducted.

The department's Triennial Research Plan, reviewed annually, identifies the research work of the department within the context of the government's overall strategic and operational priorities. The Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Group is responsible for the administration of research funds, communicating information about the results of research, evaluation and analysis activities, and providing a library service to the department.

Specific research, analysis and evaluation activity is listed at Appendix 8.