

ACCOUNTABILITY

PART

4



PART 4: ACCOUNTABILITY

We are accountable for all our decisions and activities.

ASSET
MANAGEMENT
AND EFFECTIVE
PROCUREMENT



ETHICAL
STANDARDS
AND PROTECTING
PRIVACY



ACCURATE
RECORD
KEEPING



FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION



ENSURING
WE ARE
ACCOUNTABLE
AND
TRANSPARENT—
SUPPORTING
A CULTURE OF
INTEGRITY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

External scrutiny

In addition to our obligations to the CrimTrac Board of Management, we are accountable to a range of Commonwealth bodies including the Commonwealth Ombudsman, Australian Public Service Commission, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity and Australian National Audit Office.

The Australian National Audit Office conducts performance audits of the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations and financial audits of our financial statements. CrimTrac was not selected for participation in external performance audits during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, CrimTrac has not been the subject of any judicial decisions or decisions of administrative tribunals.

Section 76 of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* requires us to report annually to the Commonwealth Ombudsman on the handling of public interest disclosures within our agency. We complied with this request for the reporting period.

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner includes the Freedom of Information Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner who review our compliance with information transparency, freedom of information (FOI) and privacy. During the year, the Commission notified us of one proposed review of an FOI request.

On 1 July 2013 we came under the jurisdiction of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI), following a 2011 recommendation from the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the ACLEI. The committee recommended that CrimTrac come under the jurisdiction of ACLEI due to the value of the information we hold.

Asset management

Information technology software is our major non-financial asset. Asset purchases are initially recognised at cost, except for purchases of less than \$5 000.00, which are expensed in the year of acquisition. Assets with a cost of less than \$5 000.00 but purchased in bulk are capitalised where the bulk purchase cost exceeds \$25 000.00.

Externally purchased third-party software is reported at fair value. Internally developed software assets are reported at cost. We capitalise internally developed software according to *Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) 138 Intangible Assets* and relevant accounting guidance. Internally developed software assets include costs generated during the application development phase of a project, but exclude costs relating to preliminary and post implementation phases—these costs are expensed. The project costs capitalised during the financial year under the policy were \$2.947 million. This includes costs for completion of some developments transferred to the asset register during the year and other major projects still within the development stages.

Our full asset accounting policies are at Note 1 in the Financial statements—Summary of significant accounting policies on page 100. Asset information is also included in our Financial statements.

Purchasing and procurement

Due to our unique function, we undertake considerable procurement for an agency of our size, both in terms of volume and value. We are especially active in procuring information and communications technology, which we do efficiently through *Whole of Australian Government Arrangements* and other Commonwealth contracts and panel arrangements.

In recent years, we have improved our procurement and contracting process to deliver greater efficiency, transparency and better record-keeping.

In September 2013, we released agency-wide procurement and contracting guidance material based on Commonwealth policy and legislation to achieve efficiencies in CrimTrac procurement processes. We updated this guidance material in preparation for the commencement of the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013* from 1 July 2014.

This reporting year, three tiers of procurement training were available to CrimTrac staff.

- More than 170 staff attended internally-run procurement and contracting training.
- Many executive level staff with spending delegations completed a Certificate IV in Government (Procurement and Contracting) course and received their certificates in November 2013. We will continue this training in 2014–15 for selected staff.
- Online procurement and contracting training as part of our mandatory Corporate Awareness training program [completed annually].

In March 2014 we created the Commercial Unit to centralise Procurement Support Officers within the Legal Team. During 2014–15, the Commercial Unit will focus on contract management and aims to develop tools, guidance and training to improve Contract Management within CrimTrac.

Consultancy services, competitive tendering and contracting

We engage consultants when we require specialist expertise or independent research, review or assessment to assist in our decision-making. We mainly select consultants through existing Commonwealth contractual arrangements. Decisions to engage consultants were made in accordance with the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* and related regulations, including the *Commonwealth Procurement Rules*.

The main purposes for which we engage consultants are:

- legal services—general legal advice
- specialist advisory ICT services
- independent evaluations and review
- business process analysis, design and other advice
- internal audit services
- property valuations.

During 2013–14, we entered into nine new consultancy contracts involving total actual expenditure of \$368 220.73. In addition, nine ongoing consultancy contracts were active during 2013–14 year, involving total actual expenditure of \$380 011.06.

Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on contracts for consultancies. Information on the value of contracts and consultancies is available on the AusTender website www.tenders.gov.au.

During the reporting period, no contracts were exempt from publication on AusTender.

ANAO access clauses

All CrimTrac contracts entered into during 2013–14, valued over \$100 000, include Australian National Audit Office access clauses.

Discretionary grants

We do not provide any discretionary grants.

Ethical standards

We continue to embed the Australian Public Service (APS) Values into everyday work practices, supporting a culture of integrity and accountability. CrimTrac's Chief Executive Instructions require all officials to ensure that actions in dealing with Commonwealth resources are consistent with the APS Values and Code of Conduct.

We fall under the jurisdiction of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, which places additional legislative obligations on us to ensure integrity remains at the highest possible standard.

Ethical values and standards are included in our development programs and training for all staff. For example, we provided information sessions to all staff about the changes to the *Public Service Act 1999* that came into effect on 1 July 2013.

Integrity Advisory Committee

In 2013 we established our Integrity Advisory Committee (IAC) to advise our senior leaders on how CrimTrac can continue to grow as an integrity-based organisation.

The IAC provides advice on potential integrity issues arising from the risk framework and on ways we can address these risks. This includes advice on:

- upholding the APS Values and the Code of Conduct, preventing fraud and managing ethical challenges associated with relationships and conflict of interest
- enhancing partner agency and stakeholder confidence in CrimTrac's integrity
- meeting best practice standards.

Privacy

We conduct our business in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and ensure that we have a range of privacy compliance processes in place.

We balance privacy considerations with delivering effective information solutions for police. We collect, retain, collate and organise law enforcement information to support and facilitate the exchange of information between law enforcement agencies. We do not alter, modify or remove information we receive from police agencies without the express permission of the originating agency. This means that we must refer any requests to correct details in our policing information systems to the originating agency. We have established a process to manage this referral that minimises the administrative burden on individuals and on police agencies.

Records management

We are committed to achieving compliance with Australian Government Digital Transition Policy by October 2014. Following the establishment of an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) Implementation Project in the previous reporting period, we have been working towards achieving compliance with the policy.

We have assessed ourselves using the National Archives Check-up 2.0 tool and continue to meet requirements of the Senate continuing order.

Advertising and market research

During 2013–14 we did not incur any costs relating to market research, polling or direct mail, or conduct any advertising or marketing campaigns.

Freedom of information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) creates a right for members of the public to access documents possessed by Commonwealth agencies. We are required to publish information to the public as part of the FOI Act Information Publication Scheme (IPS).

We have well-established processes to meet our obligations under the FOI Act and IPS. In accordance with the IPS requirements, we publish our IPS plan on our website.

During the reporting period, we received 10 FOI requests for access to documents. We met all requests within the statutory timeframes. Eight requests were for access to the applicants' personal information (in one case, to information held by CrimTrac on the applicant's deceased parent). The other request was withdrawn.

While the Commonwealth FOI Act obliges agencies to consider requests to amend or annotate records by an FOI applicant, this is not possible for information provided by police agencies to CrimTrac systems. Applications to amend personal information are directed to the state or territory police agency that provided the information.

Ecologically sustainable development

We are committed to providing an ecologically sustainable business that adheres to government and industry best practice. This saves us costs through reduced resource use, and delivers benefits to society through reduced waste and pollution.

We maintained a National Australian Built Environmental Rating Scheme (NABERS) whole of building rating of 4.5 stars, taking into account the purchase of 8.6% accredited green power. We continue to work with the property lessor to improve the performance of our premises.

During the reporting period, we diverted away from landfill:

- 8 480 kilograms of paper for recycling
- 144 cubic metres of co-mingled waste for recycling
- 1.58 tons of organic waste to vermiculture.

Tenant light and power usage decreased to 6 355 mega joules per person, 1 145 mega joules below the Energy Efficiency in Government Operations policy target of 7 500 mega joules per person.

By implementing our ACT Smart Office Program together with increased staff education, we reduced general waste to landfill to 106 cubic metres, 26% less than last year.

We continue to work on ICT initiatives to improve efficiency, in line with the *Australian Government ICT Sustainability Plan 2010–2015*. During the reporting period, key outcomes included:

- paper usage of 6.7 reams per person, below the 2015 target of 9 reams per person
- replacing our existing storage area network with a key focus on energy efficiency.

Correction of material errors in previous annual report

Our 2012–13 Annual Report stated that 866 000 National Police History checks were referred to police for further investigation. The correct figure is 881 000.

