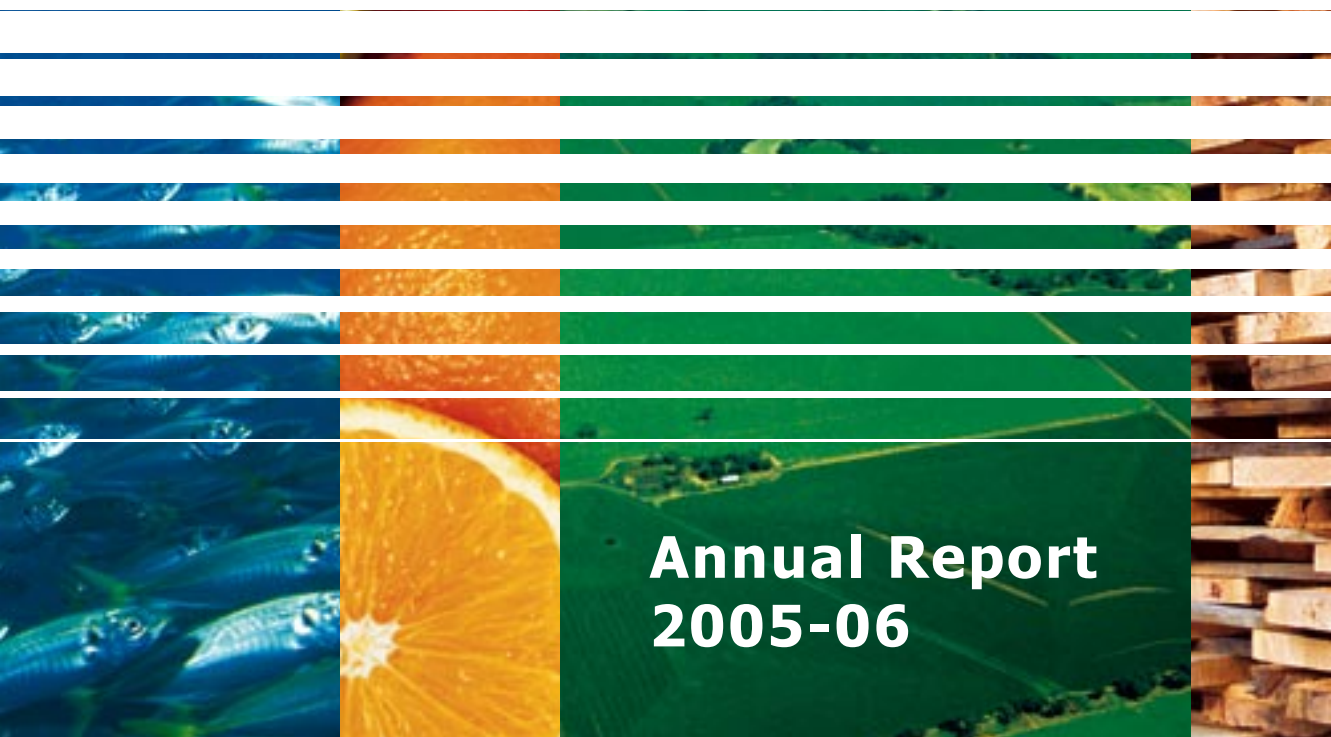




Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**



**Annual Report
2005-06**

Annual Report



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

**Annual Report
2005–06**

Annual Report

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Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

SECRETARY

The Hon. Peter McGauran MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Senator The Hon. Eric Abetz
Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation

The Hon. Sussan Ley MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ministers

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for the year ended 30 June 2006.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the *Requirements for annual reports* approved by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, as required by section 63 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (the Act).

The report notes significant progress during the year to achieve the portfolio's planned outcome—'More sustainable, competitive and profitable Australian agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry industries'—and foreshadows activities for 2006–07.

I am satisfied that the Department has prepared fraud risk assessments and fraud control plans, and has in place appropriate fraud prevention, detection, investigation, reporting and data collection procedures and processes that meet the Department's needs and comply with the Australian Government Fraud Control Guidelines.

Subsection 63(1) of the Act requires you to lay a copy of the report before each House of the Parliament on or before 31 October 2006.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joanna Hewitt'.

Joanna Hewitt

Secretary

18 October 2006

Guide to the report

Structure

This annual report of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry begins with the Secretary's review of activities and results in 2005–06 and outlook for 2006–07, followed by an overview of our portfolio and the Department's responsibilities, organisational structure and financial and human resources.

The report on performance for 2005–06, which examines our work during the year, is structured around the Department's eight output groups and Biosecurity Australia. For each area, the report highlights key achievements and measures performance against the performance indicators listed in the 2005–06 Portfolio Budget Statements.

The management and accountability section examines our policies and performance in corporate governance, human resource management, customer service, and social justice and equity. The section also details internal and external scrutiny of our operations, and gives a summary of financial performance, purchasing, use of consultants, tendering, contracting, and purchaser–provider arrangements with other Australian Government entities.

Nine appendices provide required information on such things as grants, occupational health and safety, freedom of information and the Commonwealth Disability Strategy. Appendix 9 comprises the Department's and Biosecurity Australia's financial statements for 2005–06.

To help readers find specific information, the report includes a table of contents, a list of acronyms and abbreviations, a glossary, an alphabetical index and a compliance index, showing the location of information required by law.

Availability

Copies of this report, and of a number of other publications about our activities, functions and services, can be obtained from:

Information Officer
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601
Telephone: 02 6272 4053
Email: p.r@daff.gov.au

Internet homepage for the Department: www.daff.gov.au

Internet address for the annual report: www.daff.gov.au/annualreport

Feedback

We encourage comment on this report's usefulness and content to help us produce better reports in the future.

To provide feedback, please:

Email: annual-report.contact@daff.gov.au

Telephone: **02 6272 5807**

Fax: **02 6272 5372**

or contact the Information Officer as listed above.

Correction of errors in 2004–05 annual report

The Department issued a corrigendum to the 2004–05 annual report to correct errors in the printed version relating to expenditure on consultancies.

The corrigendum was tabled in Parliament on 6 March 2006, and is available at www.daffa.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/5706/annual_report0405_corrigendum.pdf.

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Secretary's review



Australia's farmers, fishers, foresters and food processors have faced significant challenges in 2005–06, yet have also achieved important successes. Some are undergoing profound structural changes in their industries in response to the challenges they are confronting.

Prolonged drought tested even the best of our farmers in many parts of the country. Tropical cyclones devastated communities in Queensland and bushfires left their mark in Victoria. Our agricultural and food industries are increasingly feeling the effects of competition with low-cost competitors such as China and Brazil, and the

delayed conclusion of the Doha Round has postponed new market opportunities for our agricultural industries. Our marine industries face threats from illegal foreign fishing incursions, which also bring quarantine and health risks.

The Department's staff worked hard during the year and while we are pleased with the results achieved, we remain focused on delivering innovative policies, programmes and operations to support our food and agricultural industries and protect our natural resources.

From flattened banana farms in Queensland to negotiating tables in Beijing, and from our Canberra and regional offices to the stormy Southern Ocean, our people put real effort into developing and delivering our policies and programmes, as well as the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service's operations on the ground. The 'Report on performance' section of this annual report gives a formal account of our work. You will also find short cameo studies scattered through the report, recounting the experiences of some of our staff and the people they strive to support.

Portfolio priorities and achievements in 2005–06

We made significant progress towards implementing the Australian Government's commitments during 2005–06.

Prolonged drought in many regions led the government to improve and refine drought Exceptional Circumstances (EC) policy and assistance measures. We developed a drought package for farmers that included more generous EC interest rate subsidies and EC relief, and channelled other funds through the Country Women's Association to help families and communities. Agreement was reached with state and territory governments and farm organisations to make a further significant push towards a more coherent national drought policy which gives sharper emphasis to drought preparedness and management. We set

up and chaired a Drought Stakeholder Reference Group, and its work is well advanced. To streamline EC applications and approvals, the Bureau of Rural Sciences worked with state and territory governments to develop the National Agricultural Monitoring System—an initiative that will greatly assist the farming community.

The Department developed the \$220 million *Securing our Fishing Future* package announced by the government in November 2005. The package aims to put an end to overfishing and to improve the profitability of our fisheries. The centrepiece is a \$150 million business exit assistance process to remove fishing concessions in four fisheries. Our people spent many days during the year explaining the package to fishers and communities around Australia.

Other work on industry reform during the year included our administration of schemes in the sugar, forestry and dairy industries. These efforts will eventually lead to more sustainable, efficient and profitable operations in those sectors.

During the year, the Department supported a number of Australia's horticulture industries through the Industry Partnerships Programme. This work will continue into 2006–07, as we develop projects to make more horticulture industries profitable and sustainable. Vegetable growers will get a boost from the formation of the Australian Vegetable Industry Development Group (established as a result of Industry Partnerships Programme work) and the \$3 million funding provided to their industry in August 2005. Ultimately, all the horticulture industries will benefit from our work to strengthen country-of-origin labelling and develop the 'Australian Grown' labelling scheme.

The Australian Government's water policies are well defined, but implementation is proving difficult. Water reforms and water trading featured prominently in our work during 2005–06. We chaired and supported the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council's National Water Initiative Committee to work on water registers, water pricing, and metering and accounting—all of which are essential for effective water markets. Our people also worked with the southern Murray–Darling states to resolve differences over water trading, and to agree on a revised schedule to the Murray–Darling Basin Agreement allowing increased permanent interstate water trading.

The Department led the development of the government's contribution of \$500 million to the Murray–Darling Basin Commission. The money will be used to fund capital works, help achieve water recovery targets for the Living Murray initiative, and make the best use of water recovered for the environment.

With the Australian Customs Service, we developed measures to improve maritime security in Australia's northern waters, particularly against incursions by illegal foreign fishing vessels, which breach our maritime boundaries and are a significant biosecurity risk. This has been a particular focus for AQIS, as part of the government's initiative to involve indigenous communities in work to counter illegal fishing.

In the Southern Ocean, we worked with Customs and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority to implement Australia's \$217 million armed patrol

programme for the Heard Island and McDonald Islands exclusive economic zone. The patrols continue to deter toothfish poachers.

Internationally, we maintained Australia's key role in the High Seas Task Force, and agreed to work with other nations to implement nine practical proposals to deal with illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing on the high seas.

Many portfolio industries rely heavily on exporting, so maintaining and improving market access was a high priority. We worked with industry, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Australia's trading partners to reduce trade distortions, to progress negotiations on free trade agreements with important trade partners, to develop international trade standards, to reduce plant and animal disease risks, and to open up new markets and maintain existing ones. Much remains to be done in our efforts to achieve fairer, more open markets for Australian farmers and food exports. That said, big improvements in market access during the year included citrus and meat to China; sugar, sheepmeat, dairy products and beef to Europe; rice to South Korea; and wheat to India (potentially worth hundreds of millions of dollars). We backed up this work by creating new agriculture counsellor positions in Bangkok and New Delhi and a second position in Beijing.

The Department has continued to meet the government's commitment to maintain highly effective quarantine services. As a result of increased funding, Australia's quarantine programmes have been strengthened substantially over recent years, right across the pre-border, border and post-border spectrum. A major pre-border initiative has been the development and implementation of the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS) with important trading partners such as Malaysia, Indonesia, India and China.

Sporadic outbreaks of avian influenza in Southeast Asia and elsewhere during the year underscored the need for top-class quarantine and biosecurity work. In Exercise Eleusis, held in late 2005, we tested Australia's preparedness for an outbreak of pandemic avian influenza. With state governments, Emergency Management Australia and the departments of Health and Ageing, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Prime Minister and Cabinet, we simulated a three-state outbreak. The lessons learned will sharpen our response should a real outbreak occur. The government has also strengthened preparedness and response capacity with a \$44.2 million package on avian influenza in the 2006–07 Budget.

Internationally, our staff worked to inject a strong Australian voice into the work of the World Organisation for Animal Health (formerly the Office International des Epizooties, or OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the agriculture work of the Organisation for International Co-operation and Development. We also made significant contributions to capacity-building work in virtually every country in our local region, especially in the areas of plant and animal disease control.

The way we do business

Good results in the field require good systems within our organisation. We adhered to our philosophy of continuous improvement during 2005–06, setting up the International Food and Agriculture Service and our new Corporate Policy Division to bring more coherence to strategic policy development. We also undertook significant new work to develop and implement our new Collective Agreement and to improve our human resources, financial management and performance reporting systems.

To support our pool of qualified and talented people, we doubled our intake of graduates in 2005–06, and we are developing our Management Development Programme for middle management staff.

We will need to keep up this work as key leaders retire. For example, it takes many years of experience to develop the leadership and skills of someone like Dr Gardner Murray, who retired as Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer after 27 years as a senior leader in the Department. His work was recognised by the award of the Public Service Medal, the Centenary Medal, and the OIE's Gold Medal. He will be missed.

Others among our staff had their contributions honoured during the year. Dr Dennis Gebbie received the Public Service Medal, and Eva-Maria Bernoth was unanimously re-elected as President of the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission for a further three years.

AQIS won the 2005 Comcover award for innovative risk management, and received two major awards from Comcare's Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission.

The outlook for 2006–07

We don't need a crystal ball to see that in 2006–07 portfolio industries will continue to be challenged by drought, pest and disease threats, upward pressure on the Australian dollar, high fuel prices, and competition in key export markets. Lower than average growth in some parts of our livestock and wool industries, compared to the crops sector, is also likely to continue.

The Department's main priority will be the initiatives announced in the 2006–07 Budget, including restoring the Murray–Darling Basin to health, combating illegal fishing, and strengthening Australia's preparedness for an exotic pest or disease incursion (including avian flu). Despite the bitterly disappointing delay in the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, we will work hard for the reinvigoration of the negotiations and on new market opportunities for our agricultural industries.

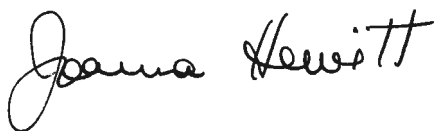
We will develop an Australian Government response to the Corish report, *Creating our future: agriculture and food policy for the next generation*. This will provide a strong framework for growing the agriculture and food sector for the next 10 years.

The work will include finalising and implementing the drought policy reforms, evaluating the *Agriculture Advancing Australia* package, and developing options for replacement programmes.

Our people will also develop the new generation of natural resource management programmes to succeed the Natural Heritage Trust and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

The Department's new Collective Agreement 2006–09 operates throughout 2006–07. We expect it to result in higher productivity, better ways of doing business, and greater skills development for our people.

There is no doubt that portfolio industries will continue to be challenged by drought, upward pressure on the Australian dollar, high fuel prices and competition in key export markets. This reinforces the need for the Department and its staff to remain active and focused in delivering innovative policies, programmes and operations for Australia's food and agricultural industries.



Joanna Hewitt
Secretary

Portfolio overview

The agriculture, fisheries and forestry portfolio comprises:

- the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the Department), which includes the Bureau of Rural Sciences, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and Biosecurity Australia (a prescribed agency under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*)
- one statutory marketing authority — the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation
- three regulatory authorities — the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, and the Wheat Export Authority
- eight research and development corporations — Cotton; Fisheries; Forest and Wood Products; Grains; Grape and Wine; Land and Water Resources; Rural Industries; and Sugar.

Figure 1 shows the portfolio structure at 30 June 2006.

The Department and agencies share one planned portfolio Outcome:

More sustainable, competitive and profitable Australian agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry industries.

Biosecurity Australia has its own planned Outcome:

To provide science based quarantine assessments and policy advice that protects Australia's favourable pest and disease status and enhances Australia's access to international animal and plant related markets.

Each agency in the portfolio has one or more planned outcomes and outputs that contribute to the achievement of the portfolio Outcome.

The following section gives an overview of the Department. More detailed information about the statutory marketing and regulatory authorities and the research and development corporations, which are administered under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, can be obtained from those agencies' annual reports.

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry oversees the portfolio, assisted by the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (see Figure 1). The incumbents in these positions changed during 2005–06 (see Table 1).

At 30 June 2006:

- the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry was the Hon. Peter McGauran MP
- the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation was Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz
- the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry was the Hon. Sussan Ley MP.

Figure 1 Portfolio structure at 30 June 2006



Table 1 Changed ministerial arrangements during the year

Date	Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
1 July 2005	The Hon. Warren Truss MP	Senator the Hon. Ian Macdonald	Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
6 July 2005	The Hon. Peter McGauran MP	Senator the Hon. Ian Macdonald	Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
27 January 2006	The Hon. Peter McGauran MP	Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz	The Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Much of the Department's work is delivered to the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council and the Primary Industries Ministerial Council. The ministerial councils were established in 2001 by agreement between the Australian Government and state and territory governments, and have many subcommittees and working groups. Figures 2 and 3 show the structure of the councils at 30 June 2006.

Figure 2 Primary Industries Ministerial Council at 30 June 2006



Figure 3 Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council at 30 June 2006



a ongoing committee b terminating task group c ‘as needed’ network

Departmental overview

Our mission

The Department's mission is:

Increasing the profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of Australian agricultural, fisheries, food and forestry industries and enhancing the natural resource base to achieve greater national wealth and stronger rural and regional communities.

Our planned outcome

Our departmental Outcome is:

Australian agricultural, fisheries, food and forestry industries that are based on sustainable management of and access to natural resources, are more competitive, self-reliant and innovative, have increased access to markets, are protected from diseases and are underpinned by scientific advice and economic research.

Our role and functions

To fulfil our mission, we are involved in activities throughout the food supply chain, from producer to consumer.

Our work:

- helps Australian agricultural, food, fisheries and forestry industries be more competitive, profitable and sustainable
- protects and develops the natural resource base on which these industries rely
- delivers scientific advice and economic research, policy advice, programmes and services to help deal with the challenges faced by the industries
- addresses Australia's entire food supply chain, from producer to processor to consumer
- upholds the quarantine, export inspection and certification and food safety standards that are essential for maintaining Australia's highly favourable animal and plant health status
- improves trading opportunities for Australian agriculture and food industries, while protecting Australia's plant and animal health and environment.

Our clients include our portfolio Ministers and the Parliamentary Secretary, industry, non-government organisations, producers, processors, consumers, importers, exporters, natural resource managers, international travellers, rural and regional communities, and state and territory governments.

Our organisational structure

At 30 June 2006, the Department comprised eight divisions, two bureaus, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) and Biosecurity Australia.

Figure 4 shows the organisational structure and the senior staff responsible for the divisions, bureaus, AQIS and Biosecurity Australia.

The National Residue Survey (NRS) is a residue monitoring programme operating within the Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health Division. The NRS Annual Report will be tabled by 31 October 2006, in the Commonwealth Parliament, in accordance with Section 10 of the *National Residue Survey Administration Act 1992*.

Outcome and output group structure

The Department's divisions, the two bureaus and AQIS work together and individually to deliver eight outputs:

Output group	Lead area
1. Natural resources access and management	Natural Resource Management Division
2. Rural policy and innovation	Rural Policy and Innovation Division
3. Industry development	Fisheries and Forestry Division Food and Agriculture Division
4. International Food and Agriculture Service	International Division
5. Product integrity, animal (including aquatic animal) and plant health	Product Integrity, Animal and Plant Health Division
6. Quarantine and export services	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS)
7. Scientific advice	Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS)
8. Economic research	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE)

Some areas of the Department, notably AQIS, Fisheries and Forestry Division, BRS and ABARE, contribute to more than one output group.

Two divisions not listed above (Management Services Division and Corporate Policy Division) provide support across the Department.

Biosecurity Australia delivers one output:

Provide science based quarantine assessments and policy advice.

Overview and outlook of the new Corporate Policy Division

Our Corporate Policy Division was formed in November 2005 to support individual divisions and the Department as a whole. The division's work includes parliamentary and ministerial liaison services, corporate communications, cross-divisional and whole-of-portfolio policy advice, and the administration of governance, security, planning and reporting activities. The division leads and coordinates continuous improvement strategies for many of our processes.

In 2006–07, the Corporate Policy Division's policy advice will address emerging issues in the field of biosecurity.

The National Biosecurity Strategy Taskforce, which brings together previous work on invasive species management and Australia's national biosecurity strategy, will further develop AusBIOSEC, the Australian Biosecurity System for Primary Production and the Environment.

The Policy Development Taskforce will coordinate the policy advice underpinning the Australian Government's response to the Agriculture and Food Policy Reference Group report *Creating our future: agriculture and food policy for the next generation* (the Corish report). The development of the government's Food and Agriculture Statement is a key priority for 2006–07.

The Corporate Policy Division will help us demonstrate our compliance with whole-of-government planning and operational requirements by coordinating departmental reports, such as the 2007–10 Corporate Plan and annual reports, and periodic performance reviews.

The Business Ethics, Security and Investigations Unit and the Internal Audit Unit will provide independent scrutiny of internal practices and processes as part of the Department's governance framework.

Overview of Management Services Division

The Management Services Division contributes to the Department's planned outcome by providing high-quality, timely and cost-effective corporate services to the divisions, their staff and stakeholders. These services are integrated and aligned with client needs and better work practices, and underpin our overall operational efficiency and effectiveness. They include building and improving organisational systems and policies, supporting the Secretary and the Executive in managing change, and providing expert advice to senior staff, Ministers and their offices.

Corporate services include financial, people and information management; administrative and office systems; information technology; outsourced services

contracts management; and the collection and distribution of industry levies through the Levies Revenue Service. These services are delivered through a mix of internal and external service provider arrangements. We have outsourced the provision of our corporate legal, information technology, fleet management, internal audit, travel and property services.

In December 2005, the Department successfully reintegrated previously outsourced payroll, recruitment, rehabilitation and occupational health and safety functions. The reintegration has allowed us to link human resources operations, systems and reporting more closely to strategic policy and planning, and has produced cost and productivity benefits.

The Management Services Division continued to work with the Department's outsourced service providers to ensure high-quality outcomes. Infrastructure projects in information and communication technology were completed to meet our future data storage requirements and strengthen core security and systems management. A number of key tenders were finalised and successfully implemented for travel, legal and property management services.

During the year, we upgraded the core financial management system and automated some revenue-generating processes. This valuable work was done in a year of significant change, which required the Department to adopt the Australian Equivalents of International Financial Reporting Standards (AEIFRS) and move to a new central government finance system developed by the Department of Finance and Administration. We made these changes and successfully integrated them into our standard operating procedures.

Levy revenue collected during the year totalled \$621 million, which was within the agreed 1% of budget estimates. Regional staff conducted 1,242 levy records inspections and 33,800 account interventions, and collected an additional \$4 million as a result. They also identified 1,475 new or potential levy payers. A number of changes to levies were implemented, including to the timing of collections on certain commodities, which will improve levy administration. A review of levy principles and guidelines has begun, and consultations with industry and recipient corporations are underway.

Anticipating the expiry of the Department's office lease of the Edmund Barton Building in February 2007, we have taken options to lease new premises in Canberra's City West precinct. The move will provide staff with better amenities and avoid the disruption that would have occurred had we refurbished our existing premises. We also expect to achieve cost savings over the 15-year lease term. The Joint Standing Committee on Public Works approved the move in December 2005. Building construction and fit-out has begun and will be completed in October 2007.

See the relevant sections of this report for more detailed information on financial and people management, our use of contractors, and workplace industrial agreements.

Financial resources

The Department

In 2005–06, the Department received \$330.594 million in appropriation revenue from the Australian Government to contribute to the costs of delivering our outputs. We obtained a further \$232.300 million in revenue from external sources.

In addition to our departmental appropriation, we administered \$2,245.988 million on behalf of the Australian Government for specific programmes. \$611.775 million of this was collected as industry levies or other charges. The administered programmes, which are aligned with our identified outputs, contributed significantly to the achievement of our planned Outcome.

Biosecurity Australia

In 2005–06, Biosecurity Australia received \$17.1 million in appropriation revenue from the Australian Government to contribute to the costs of delivering its output. The agency obtained a further \$0.4 million in revenue from external sources.

Staffing

The Department employs 4,223.2 full-time equivalent staff in Australian and international offices.

More than half of our Australian-based staff work outside Canberra in widely dispersed locations.

Overseas staff in Brussels (2), Paris (1), Rome (1), Tokyo (2), Washington (2), Seoul (1), Beijing (2), Dubai (1), Bangkok (1) and New Delhi (1) maintain relationships with key trading partners and with international organisations, such as the World Trade Organization.

The recruitment process to place an officer in Jakarta began before 30 June 2006.



Alinda Rojas at the Sydney Easter Show

