



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

LEVIES REVENUE SERVICE

BUSINESS PLAN

2003-04

Director's Forward

It is with great pleasure that I present the Levies Revenue Service (LRS) Business Plan for 2003-04 and the Report to Stakeholders for 2002-03

The Business Plan lays down the challenges for the year ahead and provides the framework for our service delivery. It describes our business commitments and maps out the way we intend to accomplish our priorities and commitments. It also explains how we plan to monitor our performance to continue improving the quality of our service.

The Report to Stakeholders highlights our achievements over the past year, and reviews our performance on levy collection against our Business Plan. The report is an important measure in our effort to improve communication and ensure we are accountable to our stakeholders.

I would like to thank everyone involved with LRS for their continued support and contribution to the effectiveness and professionalism of the levy collection system.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maxwell', is written over a horizontal line.

Steve Maxwell
(Director)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Levies Revenue Service (LRS) as part of Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the Department) and is responsible for the effective delivery of levies collection and disbursement of levies imposed by Commonwealth legislation on a range of rural commodities and products.

The Australian Government, the Department and the LRS in particular have a statutory responsibility to ensure levy collections are materially complete.

Government legislation imposes levies and charges and specifies rates, liability, and collection and compliance requirements. A series of principles and guidelines must be followed before a levy can be imposed.

The Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Act 1991 provides the legal framework for collecting levies. We collect over 60 different levies and charges from a client base of more than 8,700 levy payers, and in 2002-03 collected and disbursed almost \$540 million.

All levy funds are paid into Consolidated Revenue and regularly disbursed by special appropriations to industry corporations and bodies. LRS operates on a cost-recovery basis. This means recipient organisations meet our collection and compliance costs.

As a part of the Department, we are involved in working to achieve its Mission:

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

LRS also adheres to the Department's Values of:

Professionalism - doing the best job we can, serving stakeholders in a practical, diligent, rigorous and outcome-focused way.

Integrity - behaving ethically, acting with honesty, loyalty and courage.

Openness - building trust, being frank, open to ideas, and accessible to staff and stakeholders.

Fairness- ensuring people get a fair go, that all are treated equitably and justly.

Respect - respecting each other, our families, stakeholders, and those with different ideas and from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Within this framework our Objective is:

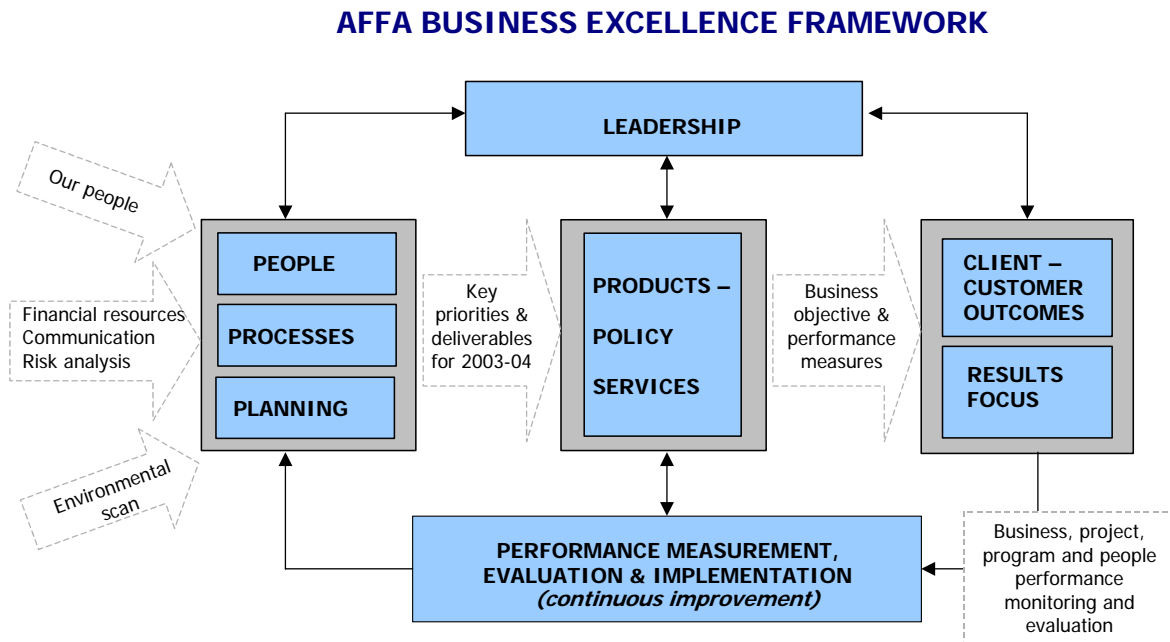
To deliver excellence in levies administration for all stakeholders

This Plan outlines the methods and strategies implemented by LRS in order to continually achieve this Objective.

2. BUSINESS EXCELLENCE IN THE DEPARTMENT

The Department's Business Excellence Framework (based on the Australian Quality Council: Business Excellence Framework) was launched in December 2002. The framework combines the Department's business elements to illustrate how our internal processes and the policy and services we produce, combine to provide positive results and outcomes for all stakeholders.

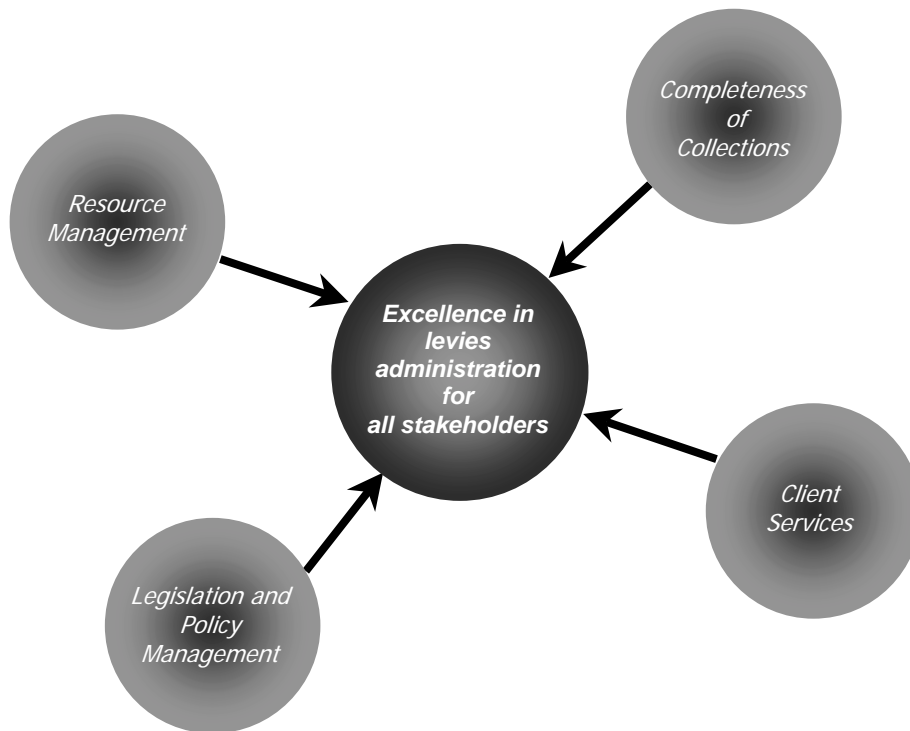
The Business Excellence Framework has strong links to our business plan as shown below.



(The dashed arrows/box show the sections of the business plan in relation to the framework)

3. OVERVIEW OF LRS BUSINESS

Senior Management sets the strategic directions and priorities for LRS. The Management Team consists of the Director and Regional and Central Office Managers. Staff members are allocated to each Output considering ongoing business and priorities and emerging issues as they occur. Some Outputs are interrelated and administered by more than one office.



This diagram shows the relationships between LRS' Objective and Outputs.

3.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUTPUTS

All staff have various levels of responsibility in ensuring Output targets are achieved.

COMPLETENESS OF COLLECTIONS

This output is has two major sub-outputs:

- **Record inspection and investigation program** – includes:
 - developing compliance strategies which ensures levy completeness;
 - administrating compliance record inspections on a risk-assessed basis;
 - monitoring of return receipts;
 - analysing industry data and other intelligence, and actioning any issues arising from this;
 - educating stakeholders about levies; and
 - down stream checks of producer records.

- **Debt management** - includes:
 - identifying, reporting and monitoring levy debt; and
 - taking the appropriate action to recover debt.

CLIENT SERVICES

This Output has six major sub-outputs:

- **Data entry** – ensure the timely and accurate entry of all levy returns;
- **Disbursements** – ensure the timely and accurate disbursement of moneys to recipient organisations;
- **Provision of reports and printed material**– includes up-to-date reports, brochures and other printed material which fulfil stakeholders needs in a prompt and accurate manner;
- **Stakeholders** – ensure stakeholders needs are met in relation to providing accurate information presented in a professional manner and understanding the background and history of levy payers;
- **Payment of matching Commonwealth R&D contributions; and**
- **Development and maintenance of our business systems.**

LEGISLATION AND POLICY MANAGEMENT

This Output is administered mainly from Central Office and has the following sub-outputs:

- **Provision of policy advice** – provide high-level policy advice to internal and external stakeholders on the impact of policy initiatives on levies administration;
- **Provision of legislation advice** – provide high-level advice to internal and external stakeholders on new and amended levies legislation; and
- **Development and implementation of levy legislation** – implement timely and accurate amendments to levy legislation.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This Output is administered mainly from Central Office and has the following sub-outputs:

- **Financial Management** – provides the framework to ensure our financial records and data are accurate and meet record inspection requirements, and develop and monitor budgets;
- **People Management** – ensures that our people management practices allow for the development and retention of staff; and
- **Planning, Performance and Communication** – coordinates our strategic direction that allows us to appropriately plan, measure our performance and ensure that our internal and external communication strategies are being met.

3.2 LRS STAFF

At 1 July 2003, LRS had 48 full-time equivalent officers: 21 in central office, Canberra, and a total of 27 regional staff in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria.

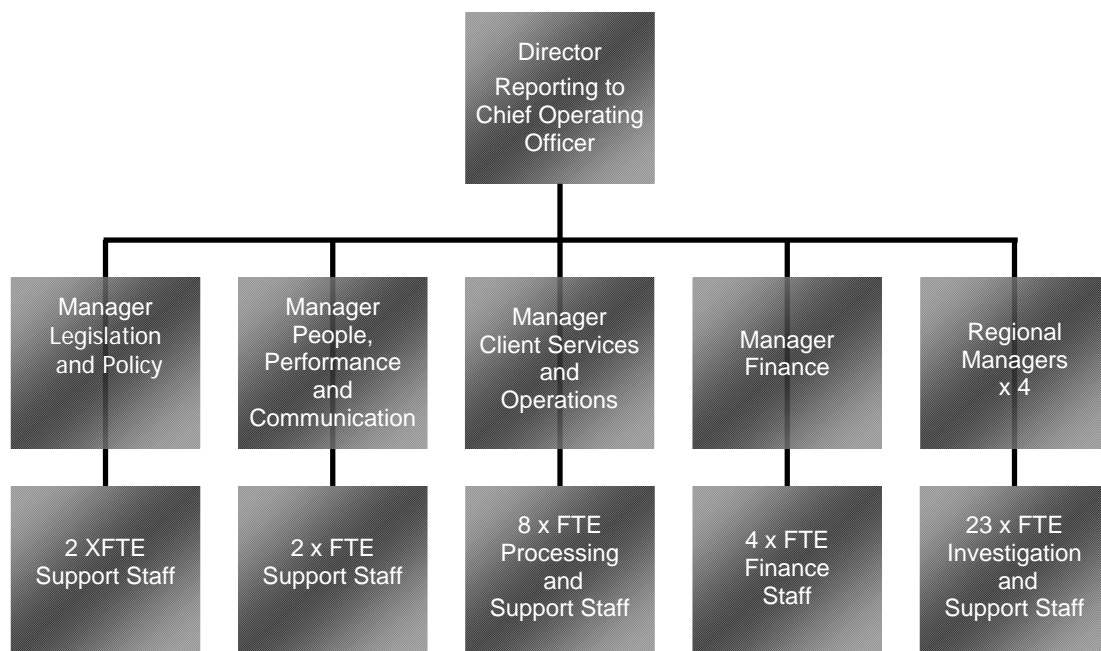


Figure 1 shows the organisation's structure and reporting lines

3.3 PLANNING FOR 2003-04

The LRS Management Team conducts a planning conference each year to set priorities, review Outputs and discuss issues, such as performance indicators and resource allocation.

LRS activities are planned well in advance, but our dynamic external operating environment means unforeseen factors requiring an immediate response do occasionally arise. Therefore we need to be flexible in our planning.

Each month a Management Team teleconference is held to monitor progress against Output plans and deal with general management matters.

Every February an all staff conference is convened. The conference serves a number of purposes, but primarily allows staff to contribute to the planning process through structured sessions and open forums. Contributions from these forums are then considered for inclusion in our next planning round.

LRS has also implemented a Network Group of field operatives who look at a broad range of issues, and then explore methods of addressing and improving these areas. Some of these issues include legislative consistency and improved levy collection processes. The Group run annual seminars for all staff during the annual conference as a vehicle to developing and maintaining a stronger knowledge of levies.

In line with the Department's People Management Principles, all LRS officers complete their performance agreement each July and are subject to quarterly review. The performance agreements feed into each team's project plans and the LRS and the department's outcomes to ensure maximum productivity.

4. KEY PRIORITIES AND TASKS

Key Priorities	Key Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivering levies collection and debt management services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> combining our levy business system (Phoenix) and our case management database investigating the feasibility of opening a regional office in Western Australia implementing alternate record inspection methods including target record inspections of higher risk levy intermediaries, desk record inspections, utilising Phoenix as a monitoring and compliance tool and to use more field time to identify non levy payers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing a continually improving service and business system for our stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementing the final stages of Phoenix to serve the Department's, LRS and stakeholder business requirements more efficiently ensuring that our levy intermediary records are maintained and accurate obtaining stakeholder feedback and acting on critical issues raised
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing an effective legislative and policy framework for levies administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementing recommendations of the legislative review which include streamlining levy legislation to allow better protection of levy income and clearer lines of levy liability developing policy positions to ensure consistent application of legislation ensuring smooth introduction of new levies and changes to existing levies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meeting our internal and external accountability requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementing an improved and more transparent cost recovery system maintaining our accounting controls and procedures developing and monitoring levy revenue and internal budgets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting our staff to ensure they have the appropriate skills, information and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> completing Web Based Tutorials and policy and procedural scenarios which give staff the tools to better understand levy liability ensuring that staff participate in key learning and development priorities identified by staff and management implementing succession planning knowledge sharing projects visiting Regional Offices and/or Central Office utilising the intranet site as a major internal information source

5. ACHIEVING OUR OBJECTIVE

The table below reiterates our Objective and Outputs, and lists the indicators we consider when evaluating our achievements against the intended objective.

To provide excellence in levies administration for our stakeholders

OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	MEASUREMENT TOOL
Completeness of Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and minimise debt level • collections meet budget forecast • ensure timely recovery of outstanding returns • dollars (\$) collected as a result of record inspection • numbers of new/potential levy payers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revenue comparison to industry indicators • percentage of overall debt in excess of 90 days • number of debtors as a percentage of all payers • number of programmed record inspections • number of interventions • number and percentage per commodity
Client Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide timely and accurate information about levies • provide timely and accurate disbursement and reporting of levies • provide information to levy payers • education of levy payers about how levy money is being utilised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • percentage of reports without errors • percentage of reports delivered by due dates • percentage of disbursements paid by due date • client satisfaction with reports • increased awareness of marketing and research and development programs
Legislation and Policy	successful implementation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new levies • changes to existing levies • accurate advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timeframes met • Industry and Government expectations satisfied
Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivery of quality levies administration within budgeted resources • accurate financial and management reporting • accountability requirements met • retention of skills • information readily available to stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivery of Outputs within budget • optimal use of available resources • record inspection requirements met • reconciled and timely payments • Skills & Knowledge Inventory • Information updated and maintained on the Department's website

6. OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The LRS operating environment provides an insight into the factors that influence the way we conduct our business.

6.1 STAKEHOLDERS

LRS is strongly committed to providing quality service to all stakeholders by encouraging feedback to help us assess how well we are meeting our Outputs.

Our main stakeholders include:

- **Government** - portfolio Ministers, Parliamentary Secretary, other Commonwealth Departmental Ministers and other areas of the department;
- **Levy beneficiaries** - producers, industry organisations, marketing and promotion bodies, research bodies and industry generally; and
- **Other interested parties** – levy payers, levy-paying intermediaries and their representative organisations.

In line with the Department's Client Service Charter, we are committed to acting in a way that is:

- prompt;
- accurate;
- professional;
- open;
- objective;
- unbiased;
- respectful;
- sensitive to client needs;
- fair;
- accountable;
- accessible; and
- based on sound business practice.

6.2 INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Developing and maintaining effective relationships with stakeholders is imperative to our business and influences the management of our internal environment to ensure the threat of risk is minimised.

The majority of our budget is provided through cost recovery from the levy recipient organisations. In the 2002-03 financial year our costs amounted to just over \$4.7 million. Recognising that the number of levies and collection points are increasing each year, it is essential that we manage our costs efficiently to achieve our statutory requirements.

Salary increases and incremental advances also affect operating costs. LRS has passed on cost increases as a result of the Department's Certified Agreement and incremental advances.

The implementation of Phoenix has brought about a significant reduction of risk exposure. Future phases of the system are being developed and implemented and will provide further

improvements. The threats posed by system failures have been met with careful monitoring of the operation of the system and ensuring we have the necessary back up and controls in place.

Our training and recruitment program has resulted in highly competent and professional staff with the skills to meet the challenges before us. Our commitment to our staff is reflected in the use of our 'people plan' to address important issues such as learning and development, succession, skills and knowledge, recognition, recruitment and skills retention.

6.3 EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Domestic and international market and trade policy changes, economic and environmental influences and industry changes all have an impact on stakeholders. These factors can represent both threats and opportunities.

Levy payers whose primary business is focussed on the domestic market may experience cash flow problems during general economic downturn.

At a global level, low commodity prices, economic downturns, trade barriers and other factors may reduce the liquidity of levy paying exporters.

Issues such as drought and flood affect the ability of levy payers to meet their levy obligations. Compliance issues can also arise in tight markets, particularly in the case of drought where intermediaries may try to use non-compliance for competitive advantage.

Opportunities can also arise where market expansion and the development of new industries or existing industries seeking the introduction of new levies leads to increased collections.

The collapse of levy payer companies and business represents a significant threat to the value of collections as liquidators may never recover preferential payments. To address this issue the LRS has procedures and business systems in place ensuring that adequate protection and capabilities are within legislation and minimise risk.

Our challenge is to remain alert to events that may influence the organisation and the management of the associated risk. We achieve this by maintaining links with industry organisations, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and monitoring the media.

7. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

To ensure our business is operating in an efficient and cost effective manner, it is essential that all expenditure be monitored.

The table below sets out our budget for 2003-04.

Levies Revenue Service Budget

Full Time Employment (FTE)	
Base Salary	2,267,102
Annual Leave	234,468
Long Service Leave	107,332
Superannuation	68,450
ComCare	60,564
ComSuper Maintenance	9,287
Overtime	30,000
Staff Development - Standard allocation	49,400
Total Employee Expenses	3,237,340
Consultancy Services	
Consultants	5,078
IT Comms and Office Equipment	
Ipex data network costs	35,154
Phoenix development, depreciation and support	280,940
Ipex MACs (moves/adds/changes)	5,376
Ipex standard workstations	178,193
Internet & SGE charges	6,500
Telecommunications	45,000
Voice communication services	10,613
Postage & freight - Standard allocation	29,640
Memberships & Conferences	
Conferences	40,000
Contributions and Membership Fees	280
Property & Accommodation	
Property Operating Expense (Central Office)	169,120
Rents and Leases for Regional Offices	130,000
Temporary and Contract Staff	
Contractors	50,000
Travel	
Domestic Travel	167,700
Vehicles	
Vehicle charges	110,000
Legal	
Legal Costs (Minter Ellison)	7,600
Legal Costs (Other Providers)	30,000

Publications/Marketing

Purchase of Publications	450
Public Relations and Marketing	2,000
Production of Publications	15,000

General Office Supplies

Stores & consumables - Standard allocation	29,640
General Copying - Standard allocation	29,640
Click charges	21,401

HR Services

HR Support Service (HR Contracts)	62,000
Recruitment Services	25,000

Other Administrative

Other Admin Expenditure - Standard allocation	14,820
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Total Supplier Expenses **1,501,145**

Depreciation Expenditure - Inhouse Software	14,091
Depreciation Expenditure - Purchased Software	978
Depreciation Expenditure - Furniture and Fittings	4,147
Depreciation Expenditure - Leasehold Improvements	1,239

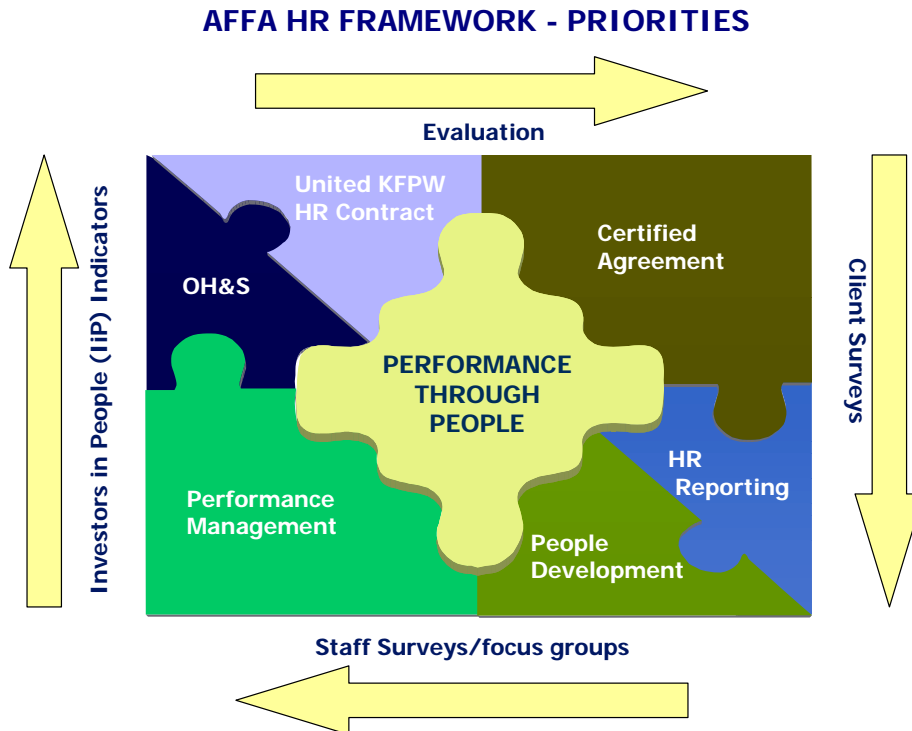
Total Depreciation & Amortisation **20,455**

Total Expenses **4,758,940****Estimated Non Appropriations Revenue****Not Internal Charging**

Section 31 Levies Income	4,632,000
Total Non Appropriations Revenue	4,632,000

8. OUR PEOPLE

The Department has identified six key human resource management priorities to advance the implementation of the Department's Performance through People (PtP) Plan as represented in the diagram below. These priorities represent the fundamental 'threads' that run through the Department in terms of human resource management.



Within the Department's broader Human Resources (HR) priority framework, the HR priorities for LRS in 2003-04 are outlined below.

HR Priority	Strategy	Evaluation
Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a systematic and integrated approach that links and fosters the learning and development of the individual with the business development of LRS through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - skills assessment; - short courses; - mentoring/coaching; - on the job training and staff rotation; - study at Tertiary Institutions; and - individual Learning Agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff surveys and feedback to ensure performance is measured • post training evaluations • skills audit and diagnosis • professional development/training feedback
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify key learning strategies • regular and open discussions and feedback • self assessment • a quarterly performance review discussion • counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work plans • learning agreement • work level standards • performance feedback
Succession Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the establishment and maintenance of processes for identifying, developing and maintaining key skills • tracking progress of individuals considered to be successors for key positions • mentoring/coaching • providing opportunities to temporarily perform other duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills and knowledge Inventory • retention levels • performance management program • performance evaluation

9. COMMUNICATION

Communicating effectively with stakeholders is central to achieving our Objective and Outputs and enables us to demonstrate our professionalism, commitment and results.

Communication Priority	Key Stakeholder(s)	Communication Strategy	Evaluation
Accuracy and efficiency	Corporations Levy payers Industry Government Corporate legal Internal Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review and refinement of written information provided to stakeholders to ensure that it is accurate and meets the needs of recipients ensuring that staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills to deal with direct inquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> client surveys feedback phone calls
Accessibility	Corporations Industry Levy payers Internal stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision of accessible information both on the department's website and the intranet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> client surveys
Professionalism	Corporations Levy payers Industry Government Internal management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that written information provided is of a high quality and that staff have the appropriate skills to provide professional communications in all areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> client surveys

10. RISK ANALYSIS

Fundamental to the success of our business is an understanding of the risks we face.

It should be noted that the management of those risks has been a natural outcome of LRS' business approach. Increasingly however we are being required to demonstrate evidence of a systematic approach to the identification, analysis, treatment, and monitoring of risk.

Business Risk Register

Risk Category	The Risk	The Impact	Current Risk Rating	Treatment Strategies	Revised Risk Rating	Treatment Agents (s) & Date for Implementation
Corporate Risk 1: Failure to implement priority programs						
A, C, F	Failure to implement new levies or changes to levies on time	<p>Levy revenue collection could be lower than expected</p> <p>Possibility of pursuing any outstanding money from expected day of levy implementation could cause significant embarrassment to LRS, the Department and Ministers</p> <p>Additional resource expenditure to redress failure</p>	Moderate	<p>Legislative framework</p> <p>Reporting against check lists and time lines across sections</p> <p>Communication with key stakeholders</p> <p>Continually improving, processes and procedures</p> <p>Updating policy to reflect current practice</p>	Moderate	LRS, the Department and Industry As required
A, C, F	Failure to forward plan could impact on our ability to meet statutory obligations in the collection and administration of levies	<p>Lower than expected levy collections and payments to industry</p> <p>Higher instances of unknown debt</p> <p>More resources would be required to pursue and administer levy money</p> <p>Loss of business</p>	Moderate	<p>LRS Business Plan</p> <p>Financial and collection procedures in place</p> <p>Monthly Monitoring of performance</p>	Low	LRS Management Team – monthly/annually

Risk Categories

A: Strategic & Political	C: Financial	E: Commercial & Legal	G: Fraud, Security & Assets	I: Technology
B: Contractual & Partnerships	D: Operational risks	F: Reputation & Public Image	H: Human Resources	J: Natural hazards

Risk Category	The Risk	The Impact	Current Risk Rating	Treatment Strategies	Revised Risk Rating	Treatment Agents (s) & Date for Implementation
C	Inaccurate posting of Revenue expenses and Debtors Incorrect calculation of payments Inadequate policy and procedures	Possibility of paying out more than receipted or legislation allows Reduced client satisfaction Unnecessary resource expenditure	Medium	Monthly monitoring of budgets and expenditure against cash flows: - on-going regular financial reconciliations - monitor and review debt financial control model -new business system -current policy and procedures on intranet Maintenance of skills and knowledge base	Low	LRS Management Areas Management Team Ongoing
F	Negative perception of compliance work by the public. Failure to provide accurate and accessible information to levy stakeholders	Damage to LRS' and the Department's public profile Information that is not accurate and accessible could lead to incorrect levy collection payments or non-payment and the perception that the Department's staff is inefficient Reduced client confidence	Low	Information available on Internet site Development and maintenance of Field Staff's public liaison skills Processes in place to ensure accurate information available	Low	Management Team All LRS Ongoing
C, E	Failure to have system back up plans in place	The inability to record collections and make timely payments Unable to record levy payer data and intelligence Loss of historical data	Low	System recovery plans in place	Low	the Department's Information Services Centre

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Risk Category	The Risk	The Impact	Current Risk Rating	Treatment Strategies	Revised Risk Rating	Treatment Agents (s) & Date for Implementation
Corporate Risk 6: Inadequate management of outsourced arrangements						
	Not applicable					
Corporate Risk 7: Failure to effectively implement people management priorities						
H	Disperse location of offices Working alone in field. Staff insufficiently skilled to administer complex and changing legislation.	Inadequate skilled back up in individual regions. OH&S issues Pressure to accept gifts or not pursue levy liability Inability to define exact liability across range of issues may give rise to shortfalls and inconsistencies in collections	Moderate	succession plans performance and learning agreements regular meetings and conferences web based tutorials regular changing of areas of responsibility regular updates of policy and procedures	Moderate	Management Team Succession Panel Ongoing, succession plan by August 2003
Other Risks						
D, F, G	Poorly targeted work priorities in relation to record inspections	Over servicing of some industries while under servicing others Reduced client confidence Over estimating/under estimating budget figures	Low	Continuing to educate LRS staff about industries and the way they operate Combining intelligences and business systems Review risk ratings and weighting of levy payers	Low	Management Team Investigation Officers Ongoing
D, F	Administering levy processes and procedures in a cost effective manner	Over employing, increasing costs to LRS and therefore reducing services to stakeholders Increasing the cost for industries and corporations in providing particular services	Low	Ensure business systems meet legislative and operational requirements Employ highly skilled staff with experience in the area they will work in Provide professional development opportunities for staff	Low	Management Team LRS Ongoing

Risk Categories

A: Strategic & Political	C: Financial	E: Commercial & Legal	G: Fraud, Security & Assets	I: Technology
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Appendix 1 – Levy Related Legislation

Primary Industries (Excise) Act 1999

Primary Industries (Customs) Charges Act 1999

Primary Industries Levies and Charges Collection Act 1991

National Residue Survey (Excise) Levy Act 1998

National Residue Survey (Excise) Levy Act 1998

National Residue Survey (Customs) Levy Act 1998

Dairy Adjustment Levy (Excise) Act 2000

Dairy Adjustment Levy (Customs) Act 2000

Dairy Adjustment Levy (General) Act 2000

Dairy Produce Act 1986

Australian Animal Health Council (Livestock Industry) Funding Act 1996

Australian Meat and Livestock Act 1997

National Cattle Disease Eradication Reserve Act 1991

Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation Act 1980

Horticultural Marketing and Research and Development Services Act 2000

Plant Health Australia (Plant Industries) Funding Act 2002

Pig Industry Act 2001

Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act 1989

Wool Services Privatisation Act 2000

Egg Industry Service Provision Act 2002