



**Australian Government**

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**Department of Communications and the Arts**



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# SECRETARY'S STATEMENT

Dear Minister

As the accountable authority for the Department of Communications and the Arts, I present the Department's 2017–18 Corporate Plan, as required under section 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

Technology continues to develop at a rapid pace and business models are transforming. The Department's close engagement with the communications and arts sectors places us at the forefront of grappling with new technological and social changes that impact how every Australian works and plays, often in unexpected ways. Reflecting this, the Department has adopted three new strategic priorities:

- › *Consumer*
- › *Advancing the sector*
- › *Content and culture*

These priorities put consumers front and centre of the Department's activities. They will also provide a useful foundation in delivering the Government's intent to progressively reform and modernise regulatory and policy settings so that our sectors are sustainable, internationally competitive and responsive to Australian consumers. In the communications sector, this work includes wide-ranging media and content reforms, initiating a series of updates to the regulatory framework for telecommunications and radio spectrum, and reforms to the copyright and classification schemes. The progress of the National Broadband Network rollout is leading to visibly changed market dynamics and consumer expectations: the consumer experience is an area of special focus for the Department. The Department continues to work with the arts sector to enhance its sustainability and to communicate its role as a fundamental contributor to the nation's economic and social wellbeing, rich cultural life and as a source of innovation and value within Australia's digital economy.

The Department's move to new premises in Canberra will provide a more modern environment for staff with more collaborative spaces and opportunities to work flexibly. We have taken the opportunity to improve our communications and IT arrangements which will facilitate day-to-day interaction between our Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney offices. It also gives us the ability to embrace more flexible and collaborative working practices with our portfolio agencies, other areas within Government and our many stakeholders. I look forward to another year of achievement for the Department, and I will report on our performance against this plan through the Department of Communications and the Arts' Annual Report.

**Heather Smith**  
*Secretary*



# OVERVIEW

## Purpose

We foster an environment in which all Australians benefit from access to diverse communications services and artistic and cultural experiences.

Strategic Priority 1: Consumer	Strategic Priority 2: Advancing the sector	Strategic Priority 3: Content and culture
<p><i>The Department works so that Australian consumers have access to reliable communications services and the opportunity to access artistic and cultural experiences.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Facilitate consumer access to affordable, competitive and reliable communications services</li> <li>1.2 Enable the effective operation of consumer protections and safeguards, so that Australians can interact safely in a trusted digital environment</li> <li>1.3 Facilitate access to Australian arts, cultural experiences and related skills development opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><i>The Department fosters sustainable and competitive communications and arts sectors and promotes their innovative and transformative influence on the economy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Work with the communications and arts sectors so that policy and regulatory frameworks support domestic and international competitiveness and the national interest</li> <li>2.2 Engage with portfolio agencies and sectoral institutions to support their governance, sustainability and achievement of Government objectives</li> <li>2.3 Assist the arts sector to build sustainability and resilience and to identify opportunities for innovation</li> </ul>	<p><i>The Department works with the communications and arts sectors to develop and share Australian content and cultural experiences with all Australians and the world.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Work with the sectors to create and promote content that reflects Australia's identity, character and cultural diversity</li> <li>3.2 Collaborate with the sectors to protect, preserve and promote Australian culture, including Indigenous arts, language and repatriation</li> </ul>

## CORE ACTIVITIES

We assist the Government's decision-making and implement its policy agenda through the provision of:

- POLICY ADVICE
- ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS AND PROGRAMS
- STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## ENABLING ACTIVITIES

The achievement of our purpose is supported by:

- DEPARTMENT CULTURE AND VALUES
- RESEARCH
- CAPABILITY BUILDING

## CAPABILITY

We will strengthen our capability in:

- ▶ LEADERSHIP
- ▶ POLICY AND PROGRAM SKILLS
- ▶ STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

**The Department operates in an environment in which rapid technological change is having a profound impact on the Australian economy and society.**

Communications technologies are now fundamental to economic growth and productivity, underpinning economic activity and enabling business and government service transformation. They also allow new ways to access and create art and culture which contributes to the health of Australian society. However, these technologies are also contributing to the disruption of traditional business models and models of work, changing social communication and how we experience our culture and that of others.

Over the life of this four-year corporate plan, the NBN rollout will be completed, 5G mobile technology introduced and other hybrid communications infrastructure delivered. Together these will provide a powerful platform to allow more data to be transferred more widely, quickly and reliably than ever before. This opens up the potential for wider-scale process automation, always-on interconnection between millions of devices, and complex interactions being handled through technology alone.

Australian arts and culture will continue to compete for audiences in an increasingly global marketplace over the next four years. Some of the traditional ways in which the arts have been accessed, such as the media, are coming under real pressure while new access pathways are opening up through technological innovation. Australia's cultural institutions will continue adapting to take advantage of new technology while preserving their important collections for future generations.

The Department's role in this complex environment is to develop the policy, regulatory and support structures to ensure that sectors can operate effectively, consumers are appropriately protected and cultural objectives are achieved. The Department works in collaboration with active and engaged stakeholders and portfolio agencies to effectively deliver on the Government's policy agenda. We engage extensively across other jurisdictions given the global nature of the portfolio's remit. An important part of our work is delivering policy and programs that address the needs of regional and remote Australia.

## OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT—CONTINUED

In the next four years, the Department will have a particular focus on:

- › *delivering and implementing the Government's reform agenda to create a contemporary policy framework which supports international competitiveness and delivers in the national interest*
- › *contributing to the broader Government agenda of encouraging productivity, growth and innovation, including supporting the links between innovation, arts and creativity*
- › *building the sustainability, diversity and recognition of Australia's creative sectors*
- › *continuing our support of the NBN rollout, with an increasing focus on the consumer experience being delivered by the communications sector*
- › *working more collaboratively and innovatively with industry, consumers and across government, in all areas of our work.*

We are building an organisational culture that values people being curious, entrepreneurial and collaborative. We continually seek a better understanding of our complex and unpredictable environment: we value evidence-based policy, economic research and examples of innovative public policy from other jurisdictions. We value consultation, and will engage with a diversity of stakeholders, both in the communications and arts sectors and other sectors that rely on them. We contribute expertise in strategic leadership, policy and program delivery and in stakeholder engagement. We will have a continuing focus on developing our capabilities in these areas.

## OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT—CONTINUED

### Strategic Risks

Our Executive Leadership Team is active in identifying emerging risks and managing identified strategic risks. Our strategic risks are matters that are fundamental to the function of the communications and arts sectors, material in delivering Government agendas, and important in supporting the wellbeing of the Australian community.

The Department actively identifies emerging risks and has identified five strategic risks that we face over the next four years. These are closely linked to the Department's ability to achieve our three strategic priorities.

Strategic risk	Mitigating strategies	Relevant to strategic priority
<p><b>1. Fulfilling the Government's strategic priority to enhance telecommunications infrastructure and consumers' access to reliable communications services.</b></p>	<p>The Department provides the Government with advice about short, medium and long-term options to reduce telecommunications market and technology risks. In addition, the Department engages closely with, and leverages processes and expertise of, other bodies such as Portfolio Agencies, the ACMA and the ACCC.</p> <p>Regulatory and market interventions are designed to be technology neutral so that they do not differentiate between the underlying network or device used to deliver or receive the communications service.</p> <p>The USO Taskforce is considering options to ensure that, as the Australian telecommunications sector evolves, Australian premises are not left without access to an adequate voice service.</p> <p>The Department monitors relevant market developments, and provides early advice to Government on major risks and opportunities and relevant policy options in response.</p>	<p>1. Consumer 2. Advancing the sector</p>

## OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT—CONTINUED

Strategic risk	Mitigating strategies	Relevant to strategic priority
<p><b>2. The Department’s interaction with stakeholders and consumers is inadequate to enable us to provide authoritative advice to the Government on portfolio issues.</b></p>	<p>The Department has developed a stakeholder engagement framework, which as part of normal business processes actively seeks stakeholder views and reports on these views as required through Executive Committee conversations. In addition, the Department actively seeks stakeholder views about the level of engagement through existing relationships and forums/mechanisms.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consumer</li> <li>2. Advancing the sector</li> <li>3. Content and culture</li> </ol>
<p><b>3. The Department’s focus and resources are not aligned appropriately to deliver on policy, program, regulation or corporate outcomes.</b></p>	<p>The Department’s Executive Committee provides oversight of the delivery of departmental and portfolio strategic priorities. Business planning and risk management processes are aligned with the Department’s strategic priorities.</p> <p>Capital projects are approved through the Department’s Investment Committee. IT and Finance projects follow set governance guidelines and are actively monitored and reported on a monthly basis.</p> <p>The Department utilises agile work practices and deploys taskforces and short-term project teams to bring necessary expertise and resourcing to urgent and strategic work priorities.</p> <p>In addition, the Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› undertakes reviews of its program delivery</li> <li>› utilises an internal audit capacity</li> <li>› researches economic drivers and international approaches that inform improved policy and program delivery.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consumer</li> <li>2. Advancing the sector</li> <li>3. Content and culture</li> </ol>

## OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT — CONTINUED

Strategic risk	Mitigating strategies	Relevant to strategic priority
<p><b>4. The Department's policy advice is sub-optimal as it is not forward looking and strategic.</b></p>	<p>Departmental business plans reflect the Government's agenda and emphasise expectations around strategic advice. Emerging strategic issues are collectively progressed at Executive Committee policy meetings. The Department reviews plans regularly to ensure ongoing strategic relevance. The Department's performance reporting framework allows monitoring against the Department's strategic priorities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consumer</li> <li>2. Advancing the sector</li> <li>3. Content and culture</li> </ol>
<p><b>5. The Department does not have the capability or capacity to achieve its strategic objectives.</b></p>	<p>The Department works with peak bodies and other stakeholders to encourage consumer and sector participation in the delivery of strategic objectives.</p> <p>The Department has implemented performance and capability strategies including talent management and a secondment program. The Department has completed enabling programs in policy essentials and public policy.</p> <p>The Department utilises agile work practices and deploys taskforces and short-term project teams to bring necessary expertise and resourcing to urgent and strategic work priorities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consumer</li> <li>2. Advancing the sector</li> <li>3. Content and culture</li> </ol>

# RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

The Department has established systems of risk oversight, management and internal controls in accordance with section 16 of the PGPA Act and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy. This includes regular monitoring and reporting on the risk environment to both the Audit Committee and the Executive Committee.

The Department has appointed a Chief Risk Officer to implement measures to:

- › *develop and maintain the capacity and capability of risk management*
- › *effectively and efficiently manage risk*
- › *encourage and build a positive risk culture*
- › *oversee the Department's enterprise risk management system*
- › *coordinate overall enterprise risk management activities within the Department.*

Risk management is to be integrated into our business planning so that:

- › *the Department's purpose and strategic priorities set the context for risk management*
- › *high priority risks influence business planning, and their treatments are integrated into business plans*
- › *risk treatments that require resources are considered and provided for in branch, operational and/or project plans and budgets*
- › *all major change activities include structured risk management*
- › *business processes and capabilities which function as risk controls and treatments are maintained as required by a relevant risk assessment.*

The enhanced risk framework facilitates a culture that promotes an open and proactive approach to managing risk. It encourages risk assessment, informed risk-taking and the anticipation and treatment of risk in delivering our priorities.

The Department encourages prudent risk-taking based on sound judgement and the best available information to facilitate innovation leading to the provision of better processes and services.

To define our risk appetite, the Department is developing a Risk Appetite Statement. This will be refreshed annually and will contain:

- › *an explanation of the concept of risk appetite and the importance of effective engagement with risk*
- › *an expression of our relative tolerance for different natures or categories of risk*
- › *examples of areas of high and low tolerance to enable staff to better interpret the guidance*
- › *areas where risk is to be minimised wherever possible.*

## RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT—CONTINUED

### Business planning framework

The Department's business planning framework includes the identification, documentation and regular monitoring of risk and mitigation strategies.

### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is chaired by members on a rotating basis and comprises the Secretary, Deputy Secretaries, First Assistant Secretaries and the Chief Risk Officer. The Committee provides advice to the Secretary on the operations of the Department, including:

- › *strategic direction*
- › *organisational priorities*
- › *capability and talent management*
- › *stakeholder engagement*
- › *governance*
- › *risk management*
- › *budget and performance monitoring.*

### Business continuity planning

The Department has a Business Continuity Plan which outlines policies, procedures and responsibilities to ensure key business activities continue in the event business is interrupted. The Plan is regularly reviewed, tested and updated, especially to incorporate lessons learnt.

### Audit Committee

The Audit Committee provides independent advice and assurance to the Secretary on the appropriateness of financial and performance reporting, the system of risk oversight and management, and internal controls. Membership of the Audit Committee comprises both external and internal members with an independent Chair.

# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The performance measures that support the activities under the strategic priorities over the four-year period are identified in the tables below.

## Strategic Priority 1: Consumer

The Department works so that Australian consumers have access to reliable communications services and the opportunity to access artistic and cultural experiences.

No	ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES				BENEFITS SOUGHT
		2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	
1.1	Facilitate consumer access to affordable, competitive and reliable communications services	<p><i>Consumer access metrics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Delivery of Mobile Black Spot Program</li> <li>› Universal Service Obligation reform in response to Productivity Commission report</li> </ul> <p><i>Consumer access and experience metrics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Minister's shareholder oversight of nbn co's delivery of the NBN</li> <li>› Consumer experiences using public data and research</li> <li>› Stakeholder engagement to support improving consumer experience, including migration to the NBN</li> </ul>				All Australians have access to communications services and can rely on them in their everyday activities
1.2	Enable the effective operation of consumer protections and safeguards, so that Australians can interact safely in a trusted digital environment	<p><i>Consumer-related reform metric:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Progress of review of framework for consumer safeguards</li> </ul> <p><i>Consumer experience metrics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Engagement across Government and industry to support effective consumer protections and safeguards</li> <li>› Information published on consumer protections</li> </ul>				Australians are informed and protected in pursuing their interests, not taken advantage of, and can benefit from the opportunities that the online environment offers
1.3	Facilitate access to Australian arts, cultural experiences and related skills development opportunities	<p><i>Consumer engagement metrics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Information on consumer engagement with National Cultural Institutions and artistic and cultural activities</li> <li>› Information on access to the objects in the national collections (on display, on tour and online)</li> </ul> <p><i>Consumer metric:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Participation in the arts sector</li> </ul>				Australians have the opportunity to enjoy and participate in diverse cultural experiences

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES—CONTINUED

### Strategic Priority 2: Advancing the sector

The Department fosters sustainable and competitive communications and arts sectors and promotes their innovative and transformative influence on the economy.

No	ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES				BENEFITS SOUGHT
		2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	
2.1	Work with the sectors so that policy and regulatory frameworks support domestic and international competitiveness and the national interest	<i>Progress of regulatory reforms metrics:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Progress of reforms, including media, spectrum and copyright</li> </ul>			<i>Reform outcomes metrics:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Telecommunications competitiveness and pricing</li> <li>› Post-implementation reviews of reforms</li> </ul>	Sector participants remain financially viable and sustainable and internationally competitive and are able to innovate and meet the needs of Australian consumers
2.2	Engage with portfolio agencies and sectoral institutions to support their governance, sustainability and achievement of Government objectives	<i>Metrics related to sustainability, governance and delivery:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Oversight of portfolio agencies' annual corporate plan compliance, financials and achievements</li> </ul>				Portfolio agencies are delivering the Government's agenda effectively and working to the benefit of the sectors and the nation
		<i>Metrics related to participation in, and funding of, the arts sector:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Information on Commonwealth, state and territory, and philanthropic funding to the arts</li> <li>› Elite training institutions' development of the next generation of arts performers and participants</li> </ul>				
2.3	Assist the arts in building sustainability and resilience and identifying opportunities for innovation	<i>Metrics related to contribution of the arts:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Analysis of contribution of arts and cultural education to employment outcomes</li> <li>› Analysis of contribution of arts and culture to the economy</li> </ul>				Australia's arts sector is sustainable, innovative and strong

PERFORMANCE MEASURES—CONTINUED

## Strategic Priority 3: Content and culture

The Department works with the communications and arts sectors to develop and share Australian content and cultural experiences with all Australians and the world.

No	ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES				BENEFITS SOUGHT
		2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	
3.1	Work with the sectors to create and promote content that reflects Australia's identity, character and cultural diversity	<p><i>Metric relating to content creation and promotion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information provided through the Australia Council for the Arts, Screen Australia, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the Special Broadcasting Service Corporation and departmental grant programs</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australians are able to access uniquely Australian content</li> <li>Content creators are informed, capable and have the skills and expertise necessary to develop Australian content</li> </ul>
		<p><i>Metric relating to Australian and children's content:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress of the Australian and Children's Screen Content Review</li> </ul>				
3.2	Collaborate with the sectors to protect, preserve and promote Australian culture, including Indigenous arts, language and repatriation	<p><i>Metric relating to Indigenous languages:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information from the Indigenous Languages and Arts Programs on Indigenous languages revived or maintained</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australia's culture, including Indigenous voices, is preserved and protected for generations to come</li> <li>Australia's culture is showcased and celebrated throughout the world</li> </ul>
		<p><i>Metric relating to Australian cultural experiences:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to cultural experiences and skills development opportunities in regional and remote areas including by, and for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</li> </ul>				
		<p><i>Metrics relating to Indigenous culture and international cultural activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on Indigenous repatriation</li> <li>Information on international cultural activities and exchanges</li> </ul>				

# REPORTING ON PERFORMANCE

**The Department will publicly report on our performance in relation to our purpose and strategic priorities throughout the four-year period of the Corporate Plan in Annual Performance Statements, which will be incorporated into our Annual Reports.**

Performance information will be monitored and certified via an internal system of quarterly reporting against activities. An assurance regime has been established to ensure that the sign-off of the Annual Performance Statement by the Secretary (as required by the PGPA Act) is supported by formal advice from First Assistant Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries. This process is scrutinised by the Performance and Financial Statements Subcommittee of the Department's Audit Committee.

The Department's planning and performance frameworks will continue to be refined and updated over the life of the Corporate Plan. We recognise that the achievement of our strategic priorities is not solely the responsibility of the Department. Industry, consumer bodies and other Government agencies, including our portfolio agencies, all have important contributions to make.

# OUR CULTURE AND VALUES

Our culture and values underpin the way we work with each other, with stakeholders and the Australian community. We are committed to the Australian Public Service (APS) transformation agenda, and our culture and values enable the Department to respond quickly to the expectations of the Government and the Australian community. We value and celebrate diversity and inclusion, so that all employees can reach their full potential.

We endeavour to be curious, entrepreneurial and collaborative in all aspects of our work.

## Curious

We imagine future possibilities and explore new ways of addressing ongoing challenges and creating opportunities. We seek out information and learn from international research and the experiences of other jurisdictions. We look deeply at issues from multiple perspectives to develop new understandings. We ask compelling questions.

We engage in continuous learning and seek out new experiences and opportunities to develop. We recognise curiosity as a precursor for innovation.

## Entrepreneurial

We innovate in the development of policy advice, program management, regulation and service delivery. We communicate our vision, pitch ideas and create opportunities for others to participate. We create new partnerships and opportunities for our stakeholders to prosper.

We are agile and adaptable, establishing taskforces and short-term project teams to bring together expertise from diverse areas.

## Collaborative

We collaborate across the Department, the APS, all levels of Government, and with industry and the community. We engage proactively and creatively with our stakeholders, and demonstrate a clear understanding of their issues and challenges. We understand and value diverse perspectives and ideas.

Through effective engagement with our stakeholders we leverage the opportunities of creativity, dynamic markets and new technologies for the benefit of all Australians.

# CAPABILITY

Over the four years covered by the 2017–18 Corporate Plan and into the future, we will prioritise the development of capabilities in:

› **Leadership:**

We demonstrate leadership and corporate citizenship across Government, the portfolio and within the Department. At all levels, we seek evidence-based and proactive thought leadership, underpinned by genuine curiosity, and an appetite to engage intelligently with risk. We also seek clear communication skills and shared vision, and a pragmatic approach to implementing decisions that are free from bias.

Our leaders provide feedback and engage in ongoing quality conversations with staff so that performance expectations are clear and development opportunities are acted upon.

› **Policy and program skills:**

We continue to build skills and best practice public administration capabilities in policy development, the development of quality measures for programs, and risk management.

We continue to build a strong and integrated evidence-based research capability. We focus on economic analysis of communication technologies and their impact on markets and the role of arts in supporting cultural and broader outcomes.

We will continue to enhance our understanding of markets, competition and commercial performance ensuring we provide authoritative policy advice. We will continue to strengthen our ability to identify, analyse and report on the arts, digital technologies, communications services and market trends to inform policy priorities.

› **Stakeholder engagement:**

We continue to build capabilities that support our engagement and contribution across the Department, the APS, all levels of Government, industry and the community.

We build and enhance our alliances and professional relationships within the communications and arts sectors, the broader Commonwealth and our international counterparts. We work with stakeholders to ensure policy advice is strategic, innovative, connected and achievable, and our programs deliver quality outcomes for all Australians.