



## Palmer Report – two years of progress – Better governance

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) reform programme was first developed in mid-2005 guided by a high-level change management taskforce comprising people from within and outside the organisation – a group to support the development of the change agenda.

Subsequently, new governance arrangements provide a much more rigorous degree of assurance to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, executive team and the community that the organisation is being effectively governed. Within this context *The DIMA Plan 2006-07* and *The DIAC Plan 2007-08* were developed through broad consultative processes.

The DIAC Plan establishes a service focus for integrating policy, programmes and delivery, reinforces Australian Public Service values and leadership behaviour expectations. The plan incorporates the department's three strategic themes:

- an open and accountable organisation
- fair and reasonable dealings with clients
- well-trained and supported staff.

In support of the DIAC Plan and to ensure effective relationships between ongoing business operations and areas managing further organisational change and a substantial systems change programme, a business operating model has been developed. The model provides a high level framework for delivery of our services to clients, covering processes, people and technology. It also supports robust communication and decision making between national office and the service delivery network throughout Australia and overseas on service delivery issues.

The primary objective is to improve our performance and consistency in the area of client service, and to provide better support to staff so that we can improve and streamline decision making. A re-orientation of our business processes will be supported by improvements in leadership, governance, training and policy, planning and implementation processes which will also enhance our openness and accountability.

To guide better decision making the IDEAL (Immigration Dilemmas: Ethics, APS Values and Leadership) Programme was created to facilitate dialogue between leaders and their teams to develop appropriate responses to ethical dilemmas and to guard against decision makers being influenced by erroneous information. This tool also supports the DIAC leadership model and demonstrates the department's intention to ensure fair and reasonable dealings with clients, and to be an open and accountable organisation with well trained and supported staff.

DIAC strategic priorities for 2007-08 are:

- supporting the government in delivering its key policy initiatives for 2007-08
- transforming our business through effective implementation of the:
  - *Systems for People* improvements
  - Client Services Improvement Programme
  - Palmer Plus change and improvement programme
- strengthening and sustaining stakeholder and community engagement
- strengthening leadership and governance capability.

This ongoing focus on promoting better practice throughout the department is supported by a substantially strengthened audit programme with an independent chair and one other independent member on the audit committee.

External representatives also play a key role on other major departmental governance committees such as the Values and Standards Committee and Client Reference Groups.