



Australian Government

Migration Review Tribunal • Refugee Review Tribunal

THE TRIBUNALS' PLAN

2007 – 2010

The Members and staff of the MRT and the RRT are here to:

- provide final independent merits review of migration and refugee decisions
- meet government and community expectations in discharging our responsibilities

We want to be known for:

- being highly competent Tribunals delivering fair, just and timely reviews
- our fairness and professionalism
- quality, integrity and consistency of decisions
- helping people understand our procedures
- listening and responding to feedback
- being courteous and respectful
- being open and accountable
- having a productive, supportive and safe workplace
- ensuring our Members and staff have an influence on our day to day operations
- meeting professional performance and ethical standards as set out in Member and staff Codes of Conduct
- our commitment to good client services as set out in our Service Charter

Our Context

We provide final independent merits reviews of visa-related decisions made by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship (the Minister) or by the Minister's delegates in the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (the Department). We are established by, and our jurisdiction, powers and procedures are set out in, the *Migration Act 1958* and in the Migration Regulations 1994. We are separate Tribunals under the Migration Act. However, all Members and staff are cross-appointed to both Tribunals and we are a single agency for financial management and staff employment purposes.

To be successful, the Tribunals must be resilient yet flexible and prepared to adapt our work practices to meet ongoing challenges in our decision making environment. We have developed an efficient and effective Membership and staff work force and organisational structure. We have a strong knowledge base, integrated and reliable business systems and sound work practices. Our reputation depends on professional, effective and courteous dealings with applicants, their representatives and supporters. We need to maintain quality, integrity and consistency of decision making. Members and staff need to have the necessary skills and expertise to properly undertake their responsibilities on both Tribunals. Professional staff support services contribute to the conduct by Members of efficient, quality reviews. Continued investment in information resources, in procedural development, in training and professional development of

Members and staff is necessary to ensure fair reviews, quality processes and decisions. We regard effective corporate governance, including defining accountabilities and measuring performance, as important for our future.

Maintaining independence in decision making is most important to us and vital to retain the respect of our stakeholders and the credibility of our review processes and decisions. The Tribunals strive to maintain a culture that is supportive and respectful of the people with whom we deal and that seeks to consult, inform and meaningfully engage with our stakeholders. Relationships need to be clearly defined and set out in the Service Charter and in agreements with other bodies.

The Tribunals operate in a labour market that is highly competitive and pursue effective strategies to recruit and retain high quality Members and staff. We are distinctive as an employer that offers very interesting and diverse work that requires good professional skills, knowledge and compassion to successfully understand and interact effectively with our clientele. We are known for our excellent terms and conditions of employment for both Members and staff and we have a reputation for being a supportive and caring employer. The Tribunals need to continue to invest in the development of all Members and staff and to ensure that working for the Tribunals is both stimulating and challenging.

The Strategic Agenda

Maintaining a reputation for delivering consistent, high quality reviews and decisions is fundamental to the success of the Tribunals into the future. This requires an ongoing strategic focus within the Tribunals and the investment of sufficient competent and appropriately trained resources.

The strategic framework for the Tribunals is drawn from: the Migration Act; the outcome and output structure that has been agreed with Government; the Minister's Statement of Expectations; and the Tribunals' Statement of Intent.

The Migration Act states that the Tribunals are required to 'pursue the objective of providing a mechanism of review that is fair, just, economical, informal and quick'. The Tribunals, as government agencies, are required to plan, budget and report under an outcomes structure. The Tribunals' outcome structure provides two key effectiveness indicators for the Tribunals:

- extent to which the MRT and the RRT contribute to the quality and consistency of administrative decision making
- professional and effective working relationships with stakeholders

This Plan identifies four key strategic imperatives:

- Decision making
- People
- Governance
- Relationships

A number of specific strategies and actions have been developed with input from Members and staff of the Tribunals. The strategies and actions are summarised in the following tables.

Our Decisions

Our objective is to be known for our fair conduct of hearings and for the timeliness, quality, integrity, consistency, fairness and justness of our decisions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	PRIORITY ACTIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<p>Establish standards for fair and quality decisions</p> <p>Ensure high quality legal, country research and library services are available to underpin decision making</p> <p>Invest in professional development to ensure decision makers are fully equipped to fulfil their obligations</p> <p>Establish time standards</p> <p>Provide effective administrative support for decision makers</p> <p>Maintain effective engagement and consultation with practitioners</p>	<p>Develop Principal Member guidelines setting standards for quality decision making and for hearings, including fair treatment of applicants and representatives</p> <p>Undertake regular performance appraisal of decision makers</p> <p>Monitor judicial review outcomes to identify trends and issues in decision making</p> <p>Maintain ongoing professional development programs for Members, legal officers and researchers</p> <p>Review time standards</p> <p>Review support services for Members</p> <p>Improve consultation on what decisions are 'of particular interest' to practitioners with a view to increasing publication of such decisions</p>	<p>Stakeholder feedback and judicial review outcomes affirm quality of decision making and conduct of fair reviews</p> <p>Reduction in the number of complaints</p> <p>Reduction in the extent of administrative errors</p> <p>Level of attendance at professional development opportunities</p> <p>Extent to which time standards are met</p> <p>Member satisfaction with support provided and the currency and quality of information</p> <p>Increased level of satisfaction of practitioners with greater access to published decisions of particular interest</p>

Our People

Our objective is to build a skilled workforce to deliver and support the conduct of reviews.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	PRIORITY ACTIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<p>Invest in continuous training and development to meet changing strategic priorities</p> <p>Build a culture that values and respects collaboration, responsiveness, participation, diversity and different roles</p> <p>Focus on improved personal and organisational performance</p> <p>Celebrate achievements on an ongoing basis</p> <p>Maintain a safe and supportive workplace which takes into account work / life balance</p> <p>Monitor workforce trends to inform recruitment and retention strategies</p>	<p>Conduct annual surveys to test Member and staff satisfaction</p> <p>Identify competency and skill sets required at level and for career development</p> <p>Review recruitment processes including advertising, selection and evaluation</p> <p>Conduct regular forums with Members and staff on strategic and policy issues as they arise</p> <p>Conduct leadership and supervision training</p> <p>Review performance management framework</p>	<p>Level of attendance at training and development opportunities</p> <p>Member and staff survey results indicate improved levels of satisfaction</p> <p>Unplanned absences are declining</p> <p>Staff turnover is reduced</p> <p>Workers compensation premium is reduced</p> <p>Reduction in the extent of administrative errors</p>

Our Governance

Our objective is to be open and accountable and for our governance framework to be robust and aligned to support our operations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	PRIORITY ACTIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<p>Ensure our governance arrangements are consistent with our agency status</p> <p>Ensure our accountability and reporting obligations are met in a timely and comprehensive manner</p> <p>Identify and reliably capture all key information required for quality case management and decision making</p> <p>Ensure our primary business and information systems are integrated, aligned and robust</p> <p>Ensure our procedures and processes take into account the needs of people coming before the Tribunals</p> <p>Ensure our structures and classifications are aligned with our work</p>	<p>Conduct a review of agency governance obligations to ensure compliance</p> <p>Finalise structure and classification reviews</p> <p>Map information and data holdings across the Tribunals against business needs and records management requirements</p> <p>Conduct an information and data holdings gap analysis</p> <p>Prepare an information technology strategy</p> <p>Document and review all key business systems</p> <p>Review data integrity on a continuous basis</p> <p>Develop or replace payroll system</p>	<p>Stakeholder feedback indicates governance obligations have been met</p> <p>Structure and classification reviews are completed and implemented</p> <p>Information and data holdings are mapped</p> <p>Members and staff have all information readily available to support their work</p> <p>Information technology plan in place and all key business systems reviewed and mapped</p> <p>New payroll system implemented</p> <p>All Members and staff are clear about the strategic direction of the Tribunals</p>

Our Relationships

Our objective is to build relationships that are based on principles of respect, openness, responsiveness and integrity.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	PRIORITY ACTIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
<p>Set out what clients can expect when dealing with the Tribunals and our service aims in a Service Charter</p> <p>Provide timely and accurate information to applicants about the Tribunals' procedures and the status of their case</p> <p>Ensure client interests and needs are met in developing policies and procedures</p> <p>Seek to achieve greater respect from applicants and representatives of Member and staff performance</p> <p>Be open and accountable and promote greater understanding of, and encourage feedback on, the Tribunals' operations through increased engagement with key agencies and interest groups</p> <p>Senior management and all supervisors to encourage involvement in the development of policies and procedures and senior management to provide regular feedback to Members and staff on strategic and operational issues</p> <p>Ensure internal communications are effective and that messages are received well</p>	<p>Develop a communications and consultation strategy to address both internal and external requirements</p> <p>Conduct regular liaison forums with key agencies and interest groups, and participate in opportunities to liaise with key agencies and interest groups</p> <p>Conduct a client survey, and a survey of key agencies and interest groups to obtain feedback on the Tribunals' performance in conducting reviews and the level of courtesy and respect afforded to applicants and representatives during hearings</p> <p>Hold regular meetings to provide updates on key issues and to determine that key messages have been received and understood</p>	<p>Extent to which service aims in Service Charter are met</p> <p>Communication and consultation strategy developed and implemented</p> <p>Surveys completed, analysed and feedback actioned</p> <p>Program of liaison forums established and conducted</p> <p>Quality of interpreters</p> <p>Feedback from the community, applicants, practitioners, Members and staff indicates that key messages are being received</p> <p>Number of complaints</p>

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