



**Australian Government**

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**Department of Broadband,  
Communications and the Digital Economy**

DEPARTMENT OF BROADBAND,  
COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

**Annual Report 07 | 08**



**Australian Government**

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COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

**Annual Report 07 | 08**

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# Letter of transmittal



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications  
and the Digital Economy**

**Patricia Scott**

Secretary

Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy  
Minister for Broadband,  
Communications and the Digital Economy  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

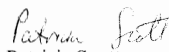
Dear Minister

I present the Annual Report of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy for the year ended 30 June 2008 for your presentation to the Parliament in accordance with section 63(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of section 63 of the Act and the Requirements for Annual Reports as approved by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit.

In accordance with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines, I certify that the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has the required fraud control mechanisms in place and that these comply with the guidelines.

Yours sincerely

  
Patricia Scott  
13 October 2008

## How to use this report

This report outlines the operations and performance of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) for the financial year ending 30 June 2008. The report is prepared in accordance with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's *Requirements for Annual Reports*, released in June 2008.

The report is structured in a number of sections.

### SECTION 1—OVERVIEW

This section contains a review of the year by the Department's Secretary and an overview of the Department, and its Ministerial arrangements, contact details, organisational structure, portfolio agencies, and its outcome and output structure.

### SECTION 2—PERFORMANCE REVIEW

This section provides a report on the Department's performance against its outcome and output. Performance is measured against the success measures in the Department's 2007–08 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) and Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES).

### SECTION 3—MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This section reports on the Department's management practices, including its governance arrangements, management of human resources, information technology and facilities, legal services, financial management and asset management.

## SECTION 4—APPENDICES

The appendices provide supplementary information on a range of important issues, including:

- › portfolio agency contact details
- › resources for Outcome 1
- › performance information index
- › table of figures index
- › appearances before Parliamentary Committees
- › external scrutiny
- › legislation and statutory instruments
- › staffing statistics
- › freedom of information
- › advertising and market research
- › discretionary grants
- › ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance report
- › Commonwealth disability strategy performance report
- › financial performance.

## SECTION 5—FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

This section contains the Department's audited financial statements for 2007–08.

## SECTION 6—OTHER INFORMATION

This section contains a list of acronyms, glossary of terms, corrections to the 2006–07 Annual Report and an index to assist the reader.

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# Section 1 Overview



## Secretary's overview

The change of Government brought new priorities and changes in responsibility for the Department in 2007–08.

### A NEW STRUCTURE AND CHANGE OF FOCUS

With the introduction of new administrative arrangements on 3 December 2007, responsibility for arts and sport moved to other portfolios. The Rudd Government has given the Department a new strategic direction.

The Minister, Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, has stated that the Australian Government's vision is to position Australia as a highly competitive and innovative knowledge-based economy. Our role is to help the Government ensure that Australia has the infrastructure, confidence, skills and regulatory settings in place as we move towards a fully-fledged digital economy.

The Department has provided strategic advice and support to the Australian Government on a wide range of significant and rapidly changing policy areas, including:

- › more accessible broadband
- › making the switch to digital television
- › improving communications
- › strengthening the consumer voice
- › promoting the digital economy
- › safer internet use
- › broadcasting
- › making a positive contribution overseas.

### MORE ACCESSIBLE BROADBAND

Australia's long-term economic prosperity and international competitiveness depend upon the digital economy which in turn depends on a world class, high-speed, broadband service.

The Australian Government has committed up to \$4.7 billion to building an open access, fibre-based National Broadband Network that will deliver minimum speeds of 12 Mbps to 98 per cent of Australian homes and businesses.

In April, the Government released a request for proposals encouraging all interested parties to come forward with innovative proposals to build and operate the National Broadband Network. Proposals will be assessed by a panel of experts who will provide a report to the Government in the first quarter of 2009.

At the same time, industry and public interest groups have been invited to provide submissions on regulatory issues associated with the roll-out of the National Broadband Network. This recognises the critical importance of future telecommunications regulatory settings, including ongoing consumer safeguards, to ensure the best outcomes for Australians and the competitiveness of the economy.

The vast size of our country makes access to effective modern communications a key priority for our rural and remote communities. The Australian Government has committed to making enhanced broadband available to the two per cent of the population not covered by the National Broadband Network. This includes access to 'safety net' broadband services through the Australian Broadband Guarantee. The Government has allocated an additional \$270 million over four years for an enhanced Australian Broadband Guarantee program.

In addition, the Government has set aside a further \$400 million to address the Government's response to the recommendations of the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee.

## **MAKING THE SWITCH TO DIGITAL TELEVISION**

Australia is part of a world-wide move to progressively turn off analog television services and replace them with digital transmission. Direct benefits for consumers of the digital switchover include better service quality, interactive features and greater viewing choices. Additional spectrum will be freed up by closing analog TV transmission.

The Department's Digital Switchover Taskforce is responsible for the transition to digital television by December 2013. This is a significant challenge, since the switchover will affect practically all households in Australia. A substantial role for the Taskforce is raising consumer awareness nationwide, and to bring on board the nearly 60 per cent of consumers who have not yet switched to digital television.

The Taskforce is working with a wide range of stakeholders, including broadcasters, retailers, manufacturers and housing agencies. These groups are represented on an Industry Advisory Group. The Taskforce has already started consulting with this body on a range of issues, including the timetable for the switchover and the provision of reliable information to consumers buying digital equipment.

The Taskforce is working closely with other government agencies including the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), who will undertake a number of technical switchover projects, such as an assessment of digital television transmission and reception throughout Australia.

## IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

Continuing to improve communication services, particularly for those living and working in regional, rural and remote Australia, is an ongoing priority for the Department.

In August 2007, the then Government established a committee to conduct a Regional Telecommunications Independent Review. Since then, the Department has supported 20 meetings of the committee and facilitated its extensive consultation activities.

The Department has received more than 200 written submissions provided to the committee, offered call centre services via a 1800 number for comments from the public, and maintained a separate committee website. The committee finalised its public consultation process in May 2008 and reported to the Minister in September. The Government will respond to this report in early 2009.

The Department also supported the Australian Government in its response to Telstra's proposal to close its CDMA mobile network as part of the transition to its 3G network. Telstra's licence condition was amended in September 2007 to require the Minister's approval before the CDMA network could be closed. There were a number of issues that needed to be addressed before the Minister could agree to the CDMA network being turned off. This required Telstra to take a number of steps to address concerns about handheld coverage and assurance that consumers were using phones suitable to their needs. Following this, the Minister agreed to Telstra closing the CDMA network at the end of April 2008.

In the fast-moving world of communications, efficient allocation and use of radiofrequency spectrum can promote economy-wide productivity gains. Spectrum is used for television, mobile telephony, wireless and satellite broadband, and emergency services. It has become a core plank of our national infrastructure. The success of Australia's telecommunications and broadcasting sectors will be closely linked with our success in harnessing the potential of the spectrum to support emerging technologies and applications. During 2007-08, the Department began preparations for major reform to the utilisation and management of spectrum.

The Department also provided close support for the appointment process of ACMA members. The ACMA appointments were among the first group to be completed under the Australian Government's new arrangements for the merit-based selection of statutory office holders.

## STRENGTHENING THE CONSUMER VOICE

Telecommunications consumers face an environment of continual technological change, globalisation, evolving market structures and new business models. A sustainable telecommunications industry ultimately relies on maintaining a healthy relationship with consumers. They can help stimulate innovation and competition, improving the quality of service and prices. The more informed consumers are, the better their choices will be about products and services.

The Minister convened the successful Consumer Representation Stakeholder Forum on 1 May 2008, which examined the effectiveness of consumer representation in the telecommunications sector. The key outcome of the Forum was strong support and feedback from both consumer groups and industry bodies for the formation of a peak telecommunications consumer representative body that would improve the interface between consumers and industry. A working group of consumer groups was subsequently established, and with the Department's support, the group has made significant progress towards establishing a new peak body. On 6 August 2008, the Minister announced the selection of the founding board of the new peak body to be known as the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN).

ACCAN will address the fragmentation of consumer groups, lead to more informed consumers and improved consumer outcomes.

## PROMOTING THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

The digital economy underpins Australia's future economic progress and prosperity. We are working to position Australia to realise the full benefits from the Government's proposed investments in broadband infrastructure.

## SAFER INTERNET USE

As we increase our reliance on broadband services there is also an increase in e-security and cyber-safety risks.

Together with a number of Australian Government agencies, state and territory governments, and industry representatives, we are working on a range of security and critical infrastructure protection forums to help address these issues.

A key line of defence for infrastructure and government networks includes protecting home users, students and small businesses. We have implemented a range of initiatives to heighten e-security awareness amongst these groups and help them stay smart online. These include:

- › an annual, national e-Security Awareness Week
- › a National E-Security Alert Service for home users and small businesses to provide them with up-to-date information in plain English.

In addition, we are developing an e-security education module for Australian primary and secondary schools.

Providing a safe environment for children online, so that they are able to take maximum advantage of all the benefits the internet offers, is a priority for the Government.

The role of parents in safeguarding their children's online activities is critical. However government and industry also have a role to play in helping to protect children.

Under the Government's cyber-safety program, \$125.8 million over four years has been committed to a range of initiatives, including information, law enforcement, education, research and content filtering.

As part of the Rudd Government initiative, a Youth Advisory Group will be formed, made up of young people aged 12 to 17 who have a passion and interest in cyber-safety. Representatives of the group will meet periodically with a Consultative Working Group on cyber-safety to consider how best to address cyber-safety issues, and communicate messages to young people.

Australian research into the changing digital landscape is also being commissioned. This research will help to finetune the cyber-safety program to meet the emerging issues and challenges presented by developments in technology.

## BROADCASTING

The Department provides advice to the Government on issues relating to the national broadcasters, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). In 2007–08 the Department commenced activities relating to the next triennial funding round for the national broadcasters starting 2009–10. This process will be informed by views put forward about the role of the national broadcasters during the Creative Stream at the Australia 2020 Summit.

The Department has also advised on the national broadcasters' roll-out of services, including digital television, the extension of NewsRadio, and the impending introduction of digital radio.

The changes to media ownership laws introduced in 2006 have led to a number of high profile transactions in both radio and television. The take over of Southern Cross Broadcasting by Macquarie Media Group, which was completed in late 2007 is an example. The Department has provided advice on the impact and scope of such changes.

The Department continued to administer more than \$8 million in funding that is provided to community radio broadcasters. Community radio broadcasting provides services to local communities and supports diversity in the broadcasting sector. This funding has been used to support various projects, provide accredited training for volunteers and subsidise costs associated with transmission.

Additional support for the community sector was provided in the 2008–09 Budget, with \$2.4 million over the next four years for the Australian Music Radio Airplay Project, an initiative to increase radio airplay of contemporary Australian music involving musicians, community broadcasters and the recording industry.

The Department is undertaking a review of access to electronic media by people with a hearing or vision impairment. This includes captioning on free-to-air and subscription television, as well as captioning on films shown in cinemas, on DVDs and audio-visual content on the internet. The review is also looking at the availability of audio description services for these media.

As part of this review, the Department released a discussion paper on 30 April 2008 inviting comment from the public on a wide range of captioning and audio description issues. The Department received 163 submissions from a wide range of people, including representatives of the television, cinema and internet industries, people with a hearing or vision impairment and their representatives, educational institutions and government agencies.

## MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION OVERSEAS

The Minister attended the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Ministerial Meeting on the Future of the Internet Economy in Seoul, Korea, the first of its kind in 10 years.

Key outcomes from the OECD Ministerial Meeting on the Future of the Internet Economy included adoption of the Ministerial Declaration (the 'Seoul Declaration'), which will enhance the Australian Government's communications and digital economy objectives, and support greater international collaboration in cyber-safety and cyber-security.

The Department established whole-of-government positions on a range of issues, particularly through its participation in OECD working parties leading up to the Ministerial meeting.

The Department also coordinated the Government's preparations for the Fourth Korea, Australia and New Zealand Broadband Summit which provided an opportunity for ICT and digital content firms and research interests from the three countries to explore potential commercial linkages and ventures.

The Minister also attended the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Telecommunications and Information Ministers' Meeting, in Bangkok, Thailand in April 2008. At this meeting, the Minister called for cross-border collaboration on a range of issues, including online child safety, undersea cable protection, international mobile roaming charges, and market reforms to support APEC's regional economic integration agenda. The Minister flagged the Australian Government's intention to broaden and deepen our links in the Asia–Pacific region, pointing out that 70 per cent of our trade is with APEC member economies.

The Department helped initiate a joint OECD/APEC-Tel project analysing the global spread of malicious software or 'Malware'. The Department continued to play a significant role in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), where it led an Australian delegation to the ITU's World Radio Communications Conference which focussed on future uses of radio spectrum for communications.

## REFORMING THE WAY THAT WE DO BUSINESS

In August 2007, following extensive consultation with staff, I announced key priorities for the Department and discussed these through all-staff meetings. Internal business reforms were also announced to help the Department achieve its priorities. A Business Improvement Unit was established to ensure that these reforms did not get lost in our busy everyday work.

Reform projects undertaken so far include:

- › improving our internal communications through regular branch meetings, Talking Heads monthly information sessions, *Insight* (our new monthly internal newsletter), all-staff meetings, and upgrades to the Department's intranet 'OwlNet'
- › reviewing our internal procedures, including the Chief Executive's Instructions and practical guides
- › increased financial training
- › improving individual performance management, introducing face-to-face induction for new staff, and a staff rotation scheme
- › providing corporate and strategic planning updates.

## SUPPORT

Delivery on the Government's priorities and our internal reforms required strong and effective corporate, legal and financial services support.

A key task in 2007–08 was to manage the abolition of the former Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, as a result of the machinery-of-government changes. The Corporate and Business, and Finance and Budgets groups played an instrumental role in ensuring that staff movements and financial arrangements relating to the Administrative Arrangements Order progressed smoothly. The subsequent establishment of a new human resource and financial framework for the new Department was a commendable achievement.

The Department's Legal Group coordinated action on behalf of the Department in response to a number of challenges brought to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, the Federal Court and the High Court on legislative and constitutional matters.

The volume of Parliamentary reports, questions from Parliament, and ministerial correspondence continued to rise over the year, and the new policies and procedures put in place ensured that a dramatic improvement on the timeliness of correspondence was achieved.

These staff faced constant challenges and I appreciate their efforts in support of the Department's operations.

### LOOKING FORWARD

This is a very exciting time for the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. We have a challenging and dynamic role and I want to thank the Department's staff for their strong commitment, drive and professionalism in the reporting period.



Patricia Scott

## Departmental overview

The purpose of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy is to work with others to develop a vibrant, sustainable and internationally competitive broadband and communications sector which promotes the digital economy for the benefit of all Australians.

The Department supports and encourages world class communications infrastructure that is competitively priced, widely accessible, highly reliable, facilitates choice and is innovative. The Department also administers legislation and regulations, and delivers a wide range of programs and services in pursuit of these objectives.

In pursuing its purpose, the Department is committed to the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct. In particular, it:

- › applies the highest standards of professionalism, ethics, probity and accountability
- › values responsiveness, initiative, flexibility, innovation and creativity
- › provides a safe working environment
- › promotes diversity, learning and development, communication and equity in employment
- › supports staff to achieve an effective work/life balance
- › encourages the sharing of knowledge between staff.

## Ministerial arrangements

Senator the Hon Helen Coonan served as Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts from 1 July 2007 until 24 November 2007. Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy was appointed Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy on 3 December 2007.

## Department contact details

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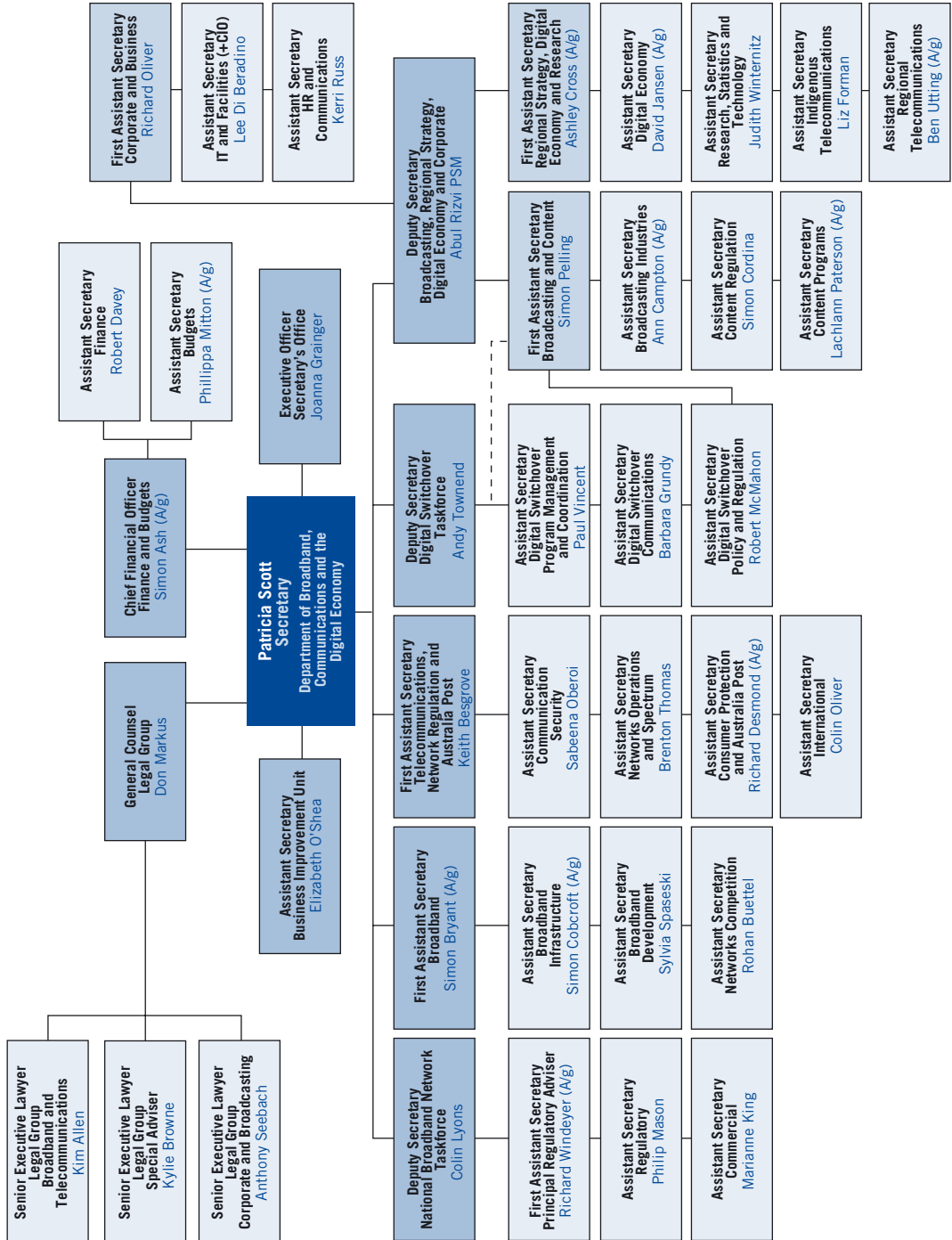
## PORTFOLIO STRUCTURE

Portfolio agencies as at 30 June 2008 are listed below. Contact details are at Appendix 1.

- › Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- › Australian Communications and Media Authority
- › Australian Postal Corporation
- › Special Broadcasting Service Corporation.

## DEPARTMENT'S ORGANISATIONAL CHART

The Department is organised into divisions. The organisational chart reflects the organisational structure as at the end of June 2008.



## Departmental structure

As at 30 June 2008, the Department's Executive Management Group comprised Patricia Scott, Secretary of the Department; Colin Lyons, Deputy Secretary for National Broadband Network Taskforce; Andy Townend, Deputy Secretary for Digital Switchover Taskforce; Abul Rizvi, Deputy Secretary for Broadcasting, Regional Strategy, Digital Economy and Corporate; Simon Bryant, First Assistant Secretary, Broadband (A/g); Keith Besgrove, First Assistant Secretary, Telecommunications, Network Regulation and Australia Post; Richard Oliver, First Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Business; Simon Ash, Chief Financial Officer (A/g); and Don Markus, General Counsel. The role of the Executive Management Group is discussed in section 3 of this report.



The Department's Executive Management Group (L–R): Abul Rizvi, Richard Oliver, Simon Ash, Andy Townend, Patricia Scott, James Cameron, Simon Bryant, Colin Lyons, Simon Pelling, Don Markus.

## Outcome and output structure

As a result of the 3 December 2007 Administrative Arrangements Order, there have been significant variations in the composition and responsibilities of the Portfolio. The outcomes relating to arts and sports were transferred to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and the Department of Health and Ageing respectively. These changes are reflected in the outcome and output structure set out in the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements for 2007–08.

The Administrative Arrangements Order also resulted in the transfer of responsibility for the information, communications and technology industry to the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. This change in responsibility was reflected in the outcome and output structure set out in the Portfolio Budget Statement for 2008–09.

This report provides a record of the Department's performance against the outcome and output structure outlined in the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements for 2007–08 with the exception of matters concerning the information, communications and technology industry for which it is no longer responsible. Accordingly, for the purposes of this report, our outcome statement should be read as:

**Outcome 1 Development of services and provision of a regulatory environment which encourages a sustainable and effective communications sector for the benefit of all Australians and an internationally competitive information economy.**

Output 1.1 Policy advice and program management which delivers competitively priced, accessible and high quality telecommunications, broadcasting and postal services and that supports development and application of a competitive capability in information and communications technology.

FIGURE 1.1 CHANGES TO THE OUTCOME AND OUTPUT STRUCTURE

2007–08 Portfolio Budget Statements	2007–08 Portfolio Additional Estimates	2008–09 Portfolio Budget Statements
<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Development of a rich and stimulating cultural sector for all Australians.</p>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Function transferred to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts</p>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b> See Outcome 3</p>
<p><i>Output 1.1</i> Policy advice, program management and agency support which promotes excellence in, preservation and maintenance of, and access to Australia's cultural activities, national cultural collections and buildings, and Indigenous languages.</p>	<p>Function transferred to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Development of a stronger and internationally competitive Australian sports sector and encouragement of greater participation in sport by all Australians.</p>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Function transferred to the Department of Health and Ageing</p>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b> N/A</p>
<p><i>Output 2.1</i> Policy advice, program management and agency support in relation to sports, anti-doping and industry development measures which support the Australian sports sector.</p>	<p>Function transferred to the Department of Health and Ageing</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Development of services and provision of a regulatory environment which encourages a sustainable and effective communications sector for the benefit of all Australians and an internationally competitive information economy and information and communications technology industry.</p>	<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Now Outcome 1</p>	<p><b>Now Outcome 1</b> Development of a vibrant, sustainable and internationally competitive broadband and communications sector which promotes the digital economy for the benefit of all Australians.</p>
<p><i>Output 3.1</i> Policy advice and program management which delivers competitively priced, accessible and high quality telecommunications, broadcasting and postal services and that supports development and application of a competitive capability in information and communications technology.</p>	<p>Now output 1.1</p>	<p>Now Outcome 1.1 Policy advice and program management that delivers competitively priced, accessible and high quality broadband and other communication services and that supports the digital economy.</p>