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The Secretary
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT AND INTEGRITY OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH

In response to your correspondence of 28 October 2002 to Mr. Michael Taylor, the following information is provided.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (AFFA) has made significant progress in recent years to ensure that its management and integrity of electronic information is in accordance with current legislation and practices. Our organisational objectives are to manage information in a disciplined, consistent and logical manner. AFFA does this by:

- Providing all staff access to correct and relevant legislation, policies and guidelines on our Intranet;
- Providing training, in-house or external, system based or theory;
- Regular attendances at seminars and all of Government sessions in regards to any changes to legislation concerning the collection, management and storage of information;
- Induction courses for new employees emphasizing importance of privacy, confidentiality and integrity of information collected;
- Security clearances to appropriate levels for the associated information that staff will be handling in the course of their duties;
- Allocation of clearly defined roles within the Department with associated responsibilities eg. Chief Information Officer (CIO), Information Technology Security Advisor (ITSA), Information Owners.
- Continuous internal audits regarding system implementation and adherence to guidelines, policies and legislation.
- Ongoing reviews and enhancements to procedures, processes and systems;
- Close working relationship with IT outsourcer, so that our IT technologies needs are met.

In relation to the terms of reference the following internal policies and guidelines apply:

Privacy, confidentiality and integrity of AFFA's electronic data

AFFA has developed a policy in relation to Departmental Information Technology and Electronic Information Security. This policy stipulates the correct procedures that are to be undertaken when dealing with specific types of information. This policy also refers to other relevant whole of Government information. eg Privacy Act, ACSII 33, Commonwealth Protective Security Manual.

Management and security of electronic information transmitted by AFFA

AFFA currently transmits electronic information through e-mail, the AFFA Website, AFFA Intranet, the daily e-mail bulletin and the Agricultural Portal. Each avenue has clearly defined guidelines and protocols as to the level and classification of information that can be transmitted and/or received. All Internet information is transmitted through a Secure Gateway Environment (SGE) administered by 90East. The SGE is compliant with Defence Signals Directorate guidelines. Websites contain Copyright, Privacy and Disclaimer statements developed by Attorney-Generals Department and AFFA's Corporate Legal Unit.

Management and security of AFFA's electronic information stored on centralized computer architecture and in distributed networks

All AFFA Corporate systems carry an additional level of access that requires accounts and passwords in addition to the standard network login. Passwords are cycled every 30 days. All wide area network links are encrypted and access to the network from remote users will be via a Virtual Private Network using ABN-DSC certificates.

Adequacy of current legislative and guidance framework

AFFA considers the current legislative framework as adequate for the management of electronic information, although any further increase in requirements may impinge on AFFA service delivery requirements to its industry clients, e.g. export certification.

AFFA has adopted the plans, policies and guidelines listed in Attachment A.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on telephone (02) 6272 5580 or by e-mail at Dave.Mitchell@affa.gov.au

Yours sincerely

David Mitchell
Chief Information Officer (A/g)
Information Services
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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Attachment A

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Related Departmental plans, policies and guidelines.

AFFA Business Plan
AFFA Client Service Charter
AFFA Communication Strategy
AFFA Chief Executive Instructions – Communications and IT
E-mail and Internet Code of Conduct
Guidelines for Effective and Responsible Use of E-mail
IT Business Resumption Plan
Information Technology and Electronic Information Security Policy
AFFA Internet content guidelines
AFFAlink – Departmental Intranet
EBulletin – Departmental daily E-mail news service
AFFA Risk Management Plan
Copyright, Privacy and Disclaimer Statements on Website and Portal
Computer Viruses – Procedures for reporting a virus

Related Commonwealth plans, policies and guidelines

Security Guidelines for Australian Government Information Technology systems (ACS 133)
Commonwealth Protective Security Manual
NOIE On-line Information Service Obligations
World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Accessibility Guidelines
Better Services Better Government (NOIE)
AusInfo Guidelines for Commonwealth Information Published in Electronic Formats
Various policies and guidelines issued by the National Archives of Australia
National Library of Australia Publications Guidelines
Australian Government Locator System (AGLS) Metadata Guidelines
Knowledge Management Framework as defined by Standards Australia
Records Management Standard AS 154891