

## **Response to Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit – Management and Integrity of Electronic Information in the Commonwealth**

### **Introduction**

Most Environment Australia staff are located in Canberra, with smaller numbers in remote locations such as Kakadu National Park, Christmas Island and Norfolk Island. The Department manages a diverse range of information which must be secured at varying levels of security. The Department's information and communication services are provided through an outsource contract as part of the Group 8 cluster.

### **The privacy, confidentiality and integrity of the Commonwealth's electronic data**

- To date there have been no incidents which have compromised the privacy, confidentiality or integrity of the Department's electronic data.
- Environment Australia considers that the Commonwealth's current requirements are adequate.
- The increased reliance on electronic information systems and interconnectivity via the Internet has meant a substantial escalation of IT Security-related costs over the last few years.

### **The management and security of electronic information transmitted by Commonwealth agencies**

- Environment Australia has a requirement to exchange sensitive or classified information with a variety of Commonwealth agencies. Existing secure networks including Cabnet, ICON and AIMS are regularly used by Environment Australia.
- Environment Australia will also connect to the FedLink service early next year following an upgrade of our Internet gateway. FedLink will provide cost-effective email communications with Commonwealth agencies.
- Environment Australia has a limited requirement to exchange classified or sensitive information with non-Commonwealth agencies. Environment Australia will explore the costs/benefits of implementing whole-of-government initiatives such as public key infrastructure or digital certificates when they are introduced.

### **The management and security of the Commonwealth's electronic information stores on centralised computer architecture and in distributed networks**

- Environment Australia uses centralised and distributed information stores. In Canberra information stores are consolidated in one location. In remote locations information is stored on local servers. Although we don't operate a storage area network our operational policies and security standards are managed centrally.

The Department's IT Security Policy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all parties to ensure information stores are maintained in a secure manner.

**The adequacy of the current legislative and guidance framework**

- Environment Australia considers that the current legislative and guidance framework is satisfactory and meets our business requirements.
- We generally receive helpful advice and guidance from central agencies on a broad range of information and communication issues. The only area where we would like to see some improvement is in the product evaluation work undertaken by DSD and the more timely listing of products in the DSD Evaluated Products List.