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United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
Office of Inspector General

Report of Inspection

Embassy Canberra
and
Consulate General
Sydney, Melbourne,
and
Perth, Australia

Report Number ISP-I-10-07A, January 2010

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PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, as issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the BBG, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and the BBG. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; whether U.S. interests are being accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; whether instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this inspection, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on-site interviews; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.



**United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors**

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its responsibility to promote effective management, accountability and positive change in the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office, post, or function under review. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

The recommendations therein have been developed on the basis of the best knowledge available to the OIG and, as appropriate, have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that these recommendations will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations.

I express my appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. W. Geisel".

Harold W. Geisel
Deputy Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- The U.S. mission in Australia is doing an impressive job advancing U.S. policy interests and solidifying the U.S. relationship with the new Australian Government.
- Mission teamwork is outstanding. The heads of agencies, sections, and consulates general work well together and support each other. The integration of constituent posts into the work of the mission is particularly noteworthy.
- The high degree of communication and coordination enhances both the quality and coherence of mission reporting. Washington users find it relevant, timely, and well sourced.
- The mission has grown considerably since the last Office of Inspector General (OIG) inspection. Nearly all of the growth has been in non-International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) positions. Requests to add American staff are expected to continue. ICASS staff should expand to meet the need for increased services.
- Mission Australia's consular operations are generally good and have a strong service orientation but require greater oversight by the country consular coordinator and principal officers.
- Public diplomacy programs at all Mission Australia's posts are active, well managed, and directed to Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) goals. Embassy Canberra's direction and support is excellent, as is coordination among mission elements. More detailed operational plans would be helpful.
- The amount of consular work at Embassy Canberra is insufficient to warrant the continuation of the consular/political entry-level officer (ELO) position. With the elimination of this position and a mid-level reporting position, the political section will have to determine how to compensate.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between March 15 and May 1, 2009; in Canberra, Australia, between May 21 and June 22; in Sydney, Australia, between May 26 and June 8; in Melbourne, Australia, between May 29 and June 15, and in Perth, Australia, between June 5 and 12, 2009. (b) (6)(b) (6)(b) (6)
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CONTEXT

Australia is a modern, industrialized country located on the world's largest island and smallest continent. Originally settled by the British, it has a population of 21.7



million, of overwhelmingly European descent. Asians account for about six percent of the population, while the aboriginal population accounts for about two percent. The Australian economy is predominantly service-based, though resources dominate its exports. After 18 years of unbroken expansion, Australia is ranked 16th in income per capita (purchasing power parity basis) and has the world's third highest standard of living (according to the Human Development Index). The United States' trade surplus with Australia is nearly \$17 billion,

its largest; it is Australia's largest investor and third largest export market (after Japan and China).

The Commonwealth of Australia is a constitutional democracy, a federal constitutional monarchy, with the Queen of the United Kingdom as sovereign, and a parliamentary system of government. The Labor Party came to power in November 2007, replacing the right-of-center Liberal-National coalition government that had held the majority of seats in the lower house since March 1996.

The driving force in Australian foreign policy has been maintaining its close association with the United States, and it has fought alongside the United States and its allies in all major conflicts from World War I to the present day. It concluded the Australia-New Zealand-United States treaty in 1951, and the U.S.-Australian alliance remains in full force under its aegis despite the withdrawal of defense obligations

toward New Zealand in 1986. Australia and the United States jointly invoked the Australia-New Zealand-United States treaty after the September 11, 2001 attacks, and Australia deployed forces to both Afghanistan and Iraq. Though the Labor government withdrew its combat presence in Iraq in 2008, it retains a training and reconstruction contingent there. It remains committed to resolving the conflict in Afghanistan.

Cooperation between Australia and the United States is broad and deep. The two countries concluded a free trade agreement in 2005 and work together to promote global stability and expand international trade. The intelligence relationship is second to none, and Australia is among the United States' most effective partners in restricting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, combating transnational crime, and promoting democracy and good governance in the Pacific. Civilian and military science and technology cooperation is active across the board, and Australia and the United States work together on climate change, water management, and pandemic disease issues.

The U.S. diplomatic mission in Australia consists of Embassy Canberra and Consulates General Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney. Mission elements include the Department; the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Homeland Security; the U.S. Secret Service; and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency. The Department of Defense, however, is the predominant presence with 20 separate Defense elements. Total U.S. direct-hire Americans number 349, with 30 eligible family members, and 234 locally employed (LE) staff. Total U.S. Mission Australia FY 2008 funding is approximately \$43 million.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The former Ambassador left Australia on January 20, 2009. The deputy chief of mission (DCM), who has been at post since August 2007, took over as chargé d'affaires. The management counselor became acting DCM.

The current management team for U.S. Mission Australia, led by the chargé and consisting of the acting DCM, section and agency heads, and three consuls general (CG), has done an impressive job of advancing U.S. policy interests and solidifying our relationship with the new Australian Government. Although at the time of the inspection, the Australian Government and media were becoming impatient with the U.S. Administration's delay in naming a new ambassador, they recognize that the Embassy is in good hands.

Counterparts in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) praise the Embassy for its contacts, access, and ability to move forward the policy agenda. They also underscored the Embassy's role in raising the profile and public perception of the United States, and the importance of the U.S.-Australian relationship. These comments are consistent with those the inspection team received from Washington agencies.

The teamwork in this mission is outstanding. The agencies, sections, and consulates work well together, helping each other and coordinating their efforts. The chargé is accessible and inclusive. He builds consensus, bringing agencies and sections together to discuss issues and options for action. He considers all views, but he is not hesitant to make decisions. Cooperation is both structured and informal. There are weekly senior staff meetings and country team meetings, as well as digital videoconferences among the Embassy and the consulates. Biweekly interagency meetings focus on the political/military and other security dimensions of the U.S.-Australian relationship. The chargé is also creating a new law enforcement working group, which is a good idea considering the expansion of the law enforcement agencies in the mission. Cooperation among the law enforcement agencies is already close.

Coordination with the consulates general is extensive. Besides the weekly digital videoconferences, to which all embassy and consulate staff are invited, the chargé holds a weekly conference call with the three CGs. He talks with them individually

more frequently and they meet in Canberra three times per year. The public affairs (PAS), political/economic, security, management, and other sections also have regular conference calls or digital videoconferences with their counterparts in the consulates general.

The process for drafting the MSP was similarly inclusive. All agencies, sections and consulates contributed. The objectives and strategies to achieve them are well-formulated. The MSP highlights the importance of public diplomacy, and the mission as a whole is conducting a very active public diplomacy program. This is the primary policy-related function of the CGs, and all, with their staffs, are heavily engaged in this shared effort. All agencies in the mission acknowledge the responsibility of PAS for media, thus ensuring effective coordination. With the many actors and high level of activity, the inspection team recommends the mission develop more detailed operational plans for its countrywide and post-specific public diplomacy efforts to ensure the most cost-effective use of personnel and resources.

The chargé and the former ambassador have been very willing to conduct high level advocacy with the host government on policy issues of importance to all sections and agencies. They also have advocated on behalf of U.S. companies for both commercial and defense contracts. They have given significant attention to security and emergency preparedness of the mission and have been very supportive of the regional security officer. The chargé chairs the emergency action committee and meets weekly one-on-one with the regional security officer. He and the regional security officer led the embassy effort in February to ensure that mission personnel were safe from the fires raging throughout the country.

The chargé has had a positive impact on the morale of the mission. Many staff members reported that they appreciate his approachable and accessible manner and his walks around the embassy. He seems well aware of issues affecting staff in the embassy and the consulates general. The chargé and the management team are sensitive to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) issues. There are no pending cases, and the only case in the past year was resolved informally.

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There are a number of factors, security among them, that are generic to all embassies and that have increased this feeling of separation. This is also relevant to embassies' ability to increase LE staff empowerment, which has been carried out further in Australia than in most missions. As noted above, the chargé walks around the embassy and knows staff members by name. He has met with the LE staff association when invited, and has hosted town meetings. When visiting the consulates general, he meets with LE staff members individually. He is currently planning to conduct meetings with LE staff in each section to discuss issues of concern, and to hold more frequent town meetings.

The mission has ten ELOs: four in Canberra (three in the political section and one in PAS); four in the consular section in Sydney; and two in Melbourne (one economic/political and one consular). There is no formal program for ELOs. At the Embassy, the chargé gave ELO political officers special assignments such as temporary duty (TDY) to East Timor and Papua New Guinea; they also interact frequently with the chargé. Consulate General Sydney offers special projects to the consular officers and, like the other posts, includes ELOs in public diplomacy and representational activities. The inspection team made an informal recommendation that the Embassy and consulates general ensure that ELOs take advantage of opportunities to participate in country team meetings and digital videoconferences, and that they receive adequate attention and mentoring from top management. This is particularly important for consular officers who have far less day-to-day contact with embassy and consulate leadership. The OIG team also made an informal recommendation that more top level attention be given to LE and direct-hire American consular staff, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne.

Consulates General

All three CGs perform well and have well-run posts with staffs producing good results across the range of their responsibilities. All have a strong, mutually beneficial relationship with the chargé.

In Sydney, there is a very active, capable CG who maintains an ambitious public diplomacy and representational schedule. She leads the largest consulate general with over 100 employees, hosting the mission's consular coordinator and main consular section, and the regional headquarters of the Foreign Commercial Service, Secret Service, Defense Force Protection Detachment, Transportation Security Agency, and

soon, the Internal Revenue Service. She created the consulate's own law enforcement working group. There is excellent cooperation among agencies and sections, allowing the consulate to manage a large workload while accommodating a heavy schedule of visitors. The CG is the most senior of the principal officers, with extensive experience in Australia and Asia, and she provides valuable advice to the Embassy leadership. She is now taking steps to integrate the large and somewhat isolated consular section into the broader work and activities of the consulate.

The CG in Melbourne also has an active public outreach agenda, speaking about his recent experience as a Provincial Reconstruction Team leader in Iraq, among other topics. He leads a consulate of 15 direct-hire Americans and 38 LE staff, including representatives of the Departments of Defense and Commerce. The cooperation among sections and agencies in the consulate general is very good. He is expanding his oversight of the consular section to promote efficiency and mentor the section's ELO. He supports the empowering of LE staff (one serves as the management officer), and he makes frequent visits throughout the consulate to build good communication and teamwork.

The CG in Perth presides over the smallest consulate general in a distant but economically significant part of the country. Like his counterparts, he is skilled and energetic at public diplomacy. He and his LE reporting officer also make very useful contributions to the reporting program of the mission. He is inclusive and concerned about morale, and promotes an air of teamwork and mutual respect.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SECTIONS

Mission Australia developed its MSP in a process that involved every section of the Embassy and each of the consulates general. It put enhancing military, intelligence, counterterrorism, and law enforcement cooperation as the mission's top priority, upgraded cooperation on climate change from fifth-ranked to second, and promoted strengthening our economic relationship from fourth to third place.

These choices reflect the mission's assessment of where it can best add value. This is a particular challenge in Australia, where the bilateral relationship is intense and contacts occur at every level of government, the private sector, and civil society. Embassy Canberra's approach builds on strong military ties, convergence of strategic and regional interests, and increasing economic integration of the countries.

Embassy Canberra does an excellent job of maintaining communications among its sections and constituent posts. As a consequence, reporting from Australia is coherent, relevant, and focused on mission priorities. The Embassy worked with the consulates to develop reporting priorities. The embassy political and economic sections conduct a weekly conference call to maintain a common focus. The economic section has organized several conferences in recent years to bring together economic reporting personnel, from Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth. Future conferences will include political section personnel, and will guide reporting throughout the mission. Washington end users find political and economic reporting timely, relevant, insightful, and well sourced.

Embassy political and economic sections share with the consular section an annual rotational detail of one officer to the DFAT. (The Australian exchange at the Department is typically for six months at a time.) This program has proven to be of great value to the mission, as all of its six alumni have taken key positions at the Embassy or consulates. DFAT's evaluation process differs markedly from that of the Department, which raises a concern that employee evaluation reports of detailees may not fully reflect their readiness for promotion. The OIG team informally recommended that Embassy Canberra review the evaluation practice for DFAT detailees to ensure they gain maximum career benefit from the detail.

U.S. Mission Australia has considerably recruited, trained, and utilized its economic and political LE staff. Both employees are well connected, good drafters, and participate actively in the work of the sections. Perth relies on its LE staff for a large measure of its reporting, and its quality is consistently good.

Political Affairs

In 2007, Australians elected an activist prime minister, whose many initiatives test the political section's ability to respond quickly to fast-changing events. The section also has been on top of the Prime Minister's nuclear disarmament initiative and the development of the Defense white paper.

The mission has an active political-military work plan and tasks the deputy political section chief and an ELO to implement it. The political section also advances U.S. security interests in its interaction with the host government on Afghanistan, counterterrorism, East Asian security, and regional cooperation in the Pacific.

The political section faces staffing challenges over the next year. It opted not to fill the counselor position to meet an "Iraq tax" levy, leaving the economic section chief to oversee both sections. It made creative use of TDY personnel to fill three unexpected vacancies, in part a consequence of curtailments for Iraq duty, which should bridge the near-term staffing gap. Over the longer term, it will suffer a permanent contraction once its labor officer leaves, as the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor decided to move that position to Suva. In addition, this report recommends that the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) withdraw support for the political/consular ELO position in the section (see Recommendation 8). The political section will need to ensure that it addresses the impact of this recommendation and determine how to avoid further reduction in its capacity. The section would be left with two experienced officers and two ELOs. It would be better able to carry out its responsibilities if it had three experienced officers, as it has had up to now.

Economic Affairs

The economic section faces its own staffing challenges. The large-scale undertakings that had threatened to strain its capacity (implementation of the Australia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, the 2007 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit, conclusion of an open skies air transport agreement) are in its past. It has undertaken a substantial reorientation of its work to put a greater emphasis on environment, science, technology, and health (ESTH) issues (notably climate and water), as set forth in the MSP. However, its counselor will soon head the political section, in addition to

his current responsibilities; ESTH issues will likely demand greater attention, particularly as the tempo of climate change discussions accelerates. The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs offered new opportunities to engage the Australians, and the economic section could encourage that bureau to provide some guidance and feedback. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the section continue to seek ESTH training for its LE staff member.

The section has done an excellent job addressing issues arising from the global financial crisis, in particular helping to facilitate interaction with the Australian Government in the United States' preferred forum, the G-20. It played a similar role in advancing shared trade liberalization goals in the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations.

With the Foreign and Commercial Service in Sydney and the bulk of business activity located there and in other major cities, the economic section's involvement with business and trade promotion occurs largely through interaction with the consulates. Resources are adequate to maintain current travel schedules, which are sufficient to support this function.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Mission Australia has effective, well-coordinated public diplomacy programs at all four posts. The country public affairs officer (CPAO) in Canberra provides effective program management focused on MSP goals. The three CGs carry out their own active public outreach efforts and fully support PAS programs.

Mission Australia targets a broad range of audiences countrywide on a variety of themes inherent in its MSP goals. Each consular district has a specific program profile. PAS programs address audiences from select politicians to broader, younger audiences in the schools and universities. The mission thematic agenda includes widely diverse programs ranging from the recent speaker program on the U.S. presidential elections to support for an American presence at Australia's contemporary arts festivals. Australia's good communications, the sophistication of its institutions, and common language make program implementation more efficient than in many other countries.

Mission Strategic Plan

Mission Australia uses an MSP program indicator that is inappropriate for measuring public diplomacy program success. Progress on Mission Australia's FY 2011 MSP "Goal #5: Reinforcing Success: Promoting Public Support for the Alliance" is to be measured by "Performance Indicator #2: Reduction in level of anti-American sentiment among foreign key audiences." The FY 2009 and later targets are progressively higher percentiles of "Australians report positive views of the United States..." U.S. Mission Australia's public diplomacy program is only one element in the Australian public's view of the United States. External factors such as the U.S. humanitarian assistance following the 2004 Asian tsunami and the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, or the 2008 Presidential elections may have as dramatic an impact upon public opinion as PAS efforts. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that Embassy Canberra discontinue this indicator in the next MSP.

Program Planning and Strategies

The scope of Mission Australia's public diplomacy program requires coordination among posts and leeway for the constituent posts to tailor their operational plans. The CPAO oversees drafting of the MSP public diplomacy goals, manages the budget, and maintains a broad schedule of national activities. The CGs in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth carry out their own activities, as well as oversee PAS activities. The CGs' personal activities and PAS programs should complement one another; moreover, in a country with more program opportunities than resources, program plans must be tightly prioritized to support decisions requiring trade-offs among opportunities and resources. Public diplomacy would be better coordinated and more cost effective if CGs and PAOs together formulated and agreed to follow a detailed operational plan, including setting priorities for target audiences and messages.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Canberra should develop a mission public diplomacy operational plan incorporating each constituent post's more detailed plan specifying priority messages, audiences, and target institutions. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Cooperation with Other Sections and Agencies

Mission Australia's PASs work well with other sections at their posts. A prime example was the way the mission coordinated events surrounding President Obama's May 15 speech in Cairo. Key Muslims and other important figures were invited to

view and discuss the speech. Consulate General Sydney's report was quoted in a White House memorandum on worldwide reaction to the speech.

The mission's consular sections work well with their public diplomacy counterparts. The consular sections support PAS educational exchange activities. PAS helps the consular sections manage their media relations. Mission Australia's political and economic officers help brief visiting American exchange groups, participate in Fulbright scholarship selection committees, and give speeches to Australian audiences. Although PAS Canberra helps arrange public speaking opportunities, the officers often make their own arrangements. If PAS issued standard operating procedures for cooperation with its economic and political section counterparts on speeches, etc., it could take better advantage of their expertise. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that PAS develop such procedures. PAS sections work well with the Department of Defense elements in Australia and elsewhere in the Pacific to maximize the public diplomacy impact of U.S. Navy ship visits.

Embassy Canberra

The Canberra PAS runs programs within its own district and provides good administrative and program support at varying levels to the three constituent posts. Embassy Canberra has an assistant PAO, and its LE staff includes cultural affairs, media specialists, and administrative staff. The consulates in Sydney and Melbourne each have a PAO and LE staff. An LE assistant executes Consulate General Perth's programs.

The Embassy Canberra PAS administrative staff carries a significant administrative load for the consulates' public diplomacy sections, allowing consulate staffs to concentrate on program implementation. For instance, the PAS LE administrative assistant maintains the cuff account for the public diplomacy budget, allowing timely, well-informed CPAO decisions on program and procurement requests. PAS Canberra also has well-qualified webmaster staff to manage the public websites for the Embassy, all three consulates and the virtual presence posts in Brisbane and Adelaide, creating efficiencies in the mission's electronic outreach. Mission public Internet presence includes a Facebook page, a YouTube channel, and blogs. PAS also videotapes speaker and other programs for presentations through their websites. The information resource center staff in Canberra and Sydney cooperate well to provide information to the Australian public, including Department products through hard-copy, email, and mission webpages.

Grants Program and Management

Mission Australia's public diplomacy grants programs, which totaled \$250,000 in FY 2008, help its limited staff effectively carry out a wide range of MSP-driven activities with its target audiences. Grants administration and management is centralized in Canberra, where the PAO has a grants warrant and provides overall program guidance in conjunction with Canberra's cultural affairs specialist. Embassy Canberra's cultural affairs assistant received recent grants management training and maintains orderly and complete files fulfilling Department regulations.

International Visitors Program

The International Visitor Leadership Program is well run and illustrates Embassy Canberra's good coordination and fair division of resources among its PASs. Candidate selection is strictly linked to MSP goals, targets future leaders, and promotes diversity among candidates.

Fulbright Commission

The Fulbright Commission in Australia is a truly bilateral program that has leveraged Fulbright prestige and placement capacity to attract major Australian private and public sector funding. Australian entities contribute \$2.4 million and the U.S. Government provides \$903,000. The chargé and Prime Minister are ex-officio, and the Melbourne CG and the CPAO are regular members of its Board of Directors. All the posts support Fulbright activities. The Commission submits all required reports to the Department.

Press Activities

Mission Australia effectively works with the Australian national and local press to place U.S. Government policy statements and highlight mission activities and other support for the bilateral relationship. There is no American direct-hire information officer; however, the PAS Canberra LE media specialist is authorized to speak on-the-record, and is in regular contact with mission LE staff and Foreign Service officers to coordinate media guidance. The Canberra media specialist compiles an Australia-wide email press summary. The PAS maintains close relations with the media that are critical to press corrections; one example is the chargé's recent "letter to the editor" printed by a major newspaper, after its front-page accused the new Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP) of criticizing an initiative of the Prime Minister.

The CPAO empowers his LE staff to compensate for the modest number of American officers in PAS. Several LE staff have responsibilities equal to those of Foreign Service officers in other posts. The Canberra cultural affairs specialist has great leeway in executing the PAS cultural and other grants programs. The Canberra media specialist works directly with the front office. PAS staff throughout the mission are receiving adequate training. LE staff empowerment is discussed more fully in the management section of the report.

Consulate General Sydney

Consulate General Sydney has a PAO and the second largest PAS LE staff. It is able to coordinate national programs as well as carry out its own initiatives in Sydney, Australia's largest city, and elsewhere in its district. For instance, PAS Sydney manages long-standing Mission Australia programs supporting the Harvard Labor Union Program professional visits to the United States. In addition, a Sydney LE media assistant, with extensive private sector media experience, developed a media presentation course for mission staff.

Consulate General Sydney's PAS also is the mission coordinating entity for the education advising centers manned by volunteers in PAS spaces in the Embassy and the three consulates. The program provides a valuable entrée to youth audiences. The Sydney advising center also holds twice-yearly orientations for Australian students and academicians going to the United States.

Consulate General Melbourne

Mission Australia rationalized its use of resources through its rightsizing efforts, which shifted resources from Canberra to Melbourne, Australia's second largest city. In fall 2008, the mission transferred one of Canberra's three direct-hire American public diplomacy officer positions to Melbourne and added two LE positions. These decisions put resources where they can be more effective, and expanded Melbourne's contacts and activities.

Consulate General Perth

Consulate General Perth is the smallest of the four posts in Australia, but maintains an active public diplomacy program that addresses a variety of audiences in Western Australia, the location of major mineral resources. The LE assistant has

extensive media experience and good contacts in the region. The consulate takes great advantage of the opportunities U.S. Navy ship visits provide for representational events and community relations activities.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Mission Australia's consular operations generally function well, with an excellent customer service orientation. Australia is a stable first-world country with the full range of local services available to visitors as well as residents. American citizens are widely dispersed throughout the local population. American citizens in need of assistance can easily reach a consular officer. Nonimmigrant visa (NIV) wait times across the country are kept under ten days, even in high volume seasons. Throughout the country, approximately 75 percent of the visa applicants are Australian citizens who qualify for visa waivers but desire to travel for longer than the 90-day limit or require specialized visas. The remaining visa applicants are a wide range of third country nationals in Australia as students, businessmen, tourists, or new immigrants. The information network is excellent, including a call center and dedicated email system, whose personnel usually respond to inquiries within a day.

With ten full- and part-time consular officers spread thinly among the Embassy and three constituent posts, overseeing and coordinating this operation is not easy. The country coordinator is located at Consulate General Sydney. The CG in Sydney supervises him, but he, in turn, has oversight responsibility for operations in other locations. His responsibilities include establishing consistent, mission consular policies and procedures that conform to Department regulations, and ensuring that each consular section has sufficient resources to carry out its duties in a timely fashion.

Country Coordination – Consular Management

The country coordinator did a fine job securing a strong, unified approach to preparing the Australian traveling public for the new electronic registration requirements for travelers from visa waiver countries. Similarly, he is appropriately in the lead coordinating the transition to the new on-line visa application process (DS-160). He also produces a weekly report of consular activities for a wide audience, including the CGs in Mission Australia and the DCM.

The country coordinator's location in Sydney and supervision by the Sydney CG make it even more important that the country coordinator provide direct information to the DCM on countrywide consular issues. The country coordinator

and DCM (who is his reviewing officer) do not hold periodic one-on-one meetings, either in person or by phone.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Canberra should establish a monthly meeting between the consular country coordinator and the deputy chief of mission to discuss countrywide consular activities. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

One of the challenges of managing a consular operation of this size and diversity is standardizing practices countrywide. The periodic assignment of TDY officers from Sydney to Melbourne and Perth, the TDY visit of the ELO in Melbourne to Sydney, and the annual consular conference in Sydney for the consular chiefs, all help this process to some degree. However, because consular sections throughout Australia generally do function well, the country coordinator tends to allow each section to function quite independently. A significant difference in visa refusal rates among the visa units in spite of the common applicant pool, as well as individual personnel issues, indicate a need for the coordinator to be more active. One method might be taking advantage of the excellent communications network in Australia to conduct regular meetings with the consular chiefs and, occasionally, with all consular staff. Other sections of Mission Australia already conduct similar countrywide meetings. These meetings could be used to discuss mission trends and achieve some consensus on how certain matters are treated among the various consular sections.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Canberra should hold biweekly phone conferences, hosted by the consular country coordinator, with all consular chiefs in Australia, to discuss specific and countrywide consular trends. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Canberra should hold quarterly digital videoconferences, hosted by the consular country coordinator, that include direct-hire American and locally employed staff are included. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Country Coordination – Fraud Prevention

Australia is a low fraud environment. However a significant proportion of visa applications in Australia come from third countries, including countries of concern to the United States. The consular sections have an appropriate degree of awareness and concern about these applicants.

The mission is establishing local fraud investigator positions at the consulates in Sydney and Melbourne. These new positions need central guidance on a number of issues, including the kinds of cases to refer for investigation, whether to conduct an investigation locally or refer it to the Kentucky Consular Center, guidelines for interacting with Australian authorities, and coordinated access to certain databases.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Canberra should establish standard operating procedures and operational guidelines for the newly established fraud prevention investigator positions in Consulates General Sydney and Melbourne. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Country Coordination – Visas

In 2007, Australia and the United States established a two-year pilot work/study program allowing a very flexible basis for one-year youth exchanges. The program proved popular in both countries, and the United States established similar programs with the United Kingdom and Ireland. There are a number of legislative fixes required to make the pilot a permanent program. The pilot program is due to expire in September 2009, and, to date, the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (ECA) has not taken any steps to extend the program in its current form or make it permanent. ECA, EAP, and Mission Australia are discussing possible revision of the pilot program.

Given the immense size of Australian consular districts and the significant number of large-scale cultural exchanges between the United States and Australia (symphony orchestras, Special Olympic teams, etc.), Mission Australia requested that CA authorize use of a laptop nonimmigrant visa system (LNIV) in Australia. The system would be used in conjunction with regularly scheduled outreach and circuit rider trips to centers away from the Embassy or consulates general. LNIV is still considered an experimental system and is not approved for wide-scale deployment. CA is still considering Canberra's request, pending the results of a survey, to establish a surcharge for using the LNIV.

Panel physicians are located in cities around Australia to conduct visa-related examinations. Consular staff have not visited many of these physicians for several years. The inspection team made an informal recommendation that a regular schedule of visits be established.

Several comments regarding consular management controls for Mission Australia will be found separately under the section for management controls.

Consulate General Sydney

Consulate General Sydney, located in Australia's largest city and commercial center, hosts the largest consular section in Australia. The section's daily operations are supervised by the country coordinator's mid-level deputy, allowing the country coordinator to focus on Australia-wide issues. This is an appropriate division of the work. Under the deputy's detail-oriented leadership, the section is productive and efficient. The standard operating procedures for consular operations in Sydney are the most thorough this OIG team has ever encountered.

The consular section is located on the 59th floor of a Sydney high-rise and has a small waiting area outside the interview hardline. There is a larger consular waiting room on the tenth floor. Movement of the clientele between floors is handled smoothly, except that there are no public restrooms accessible to consular clients after they reach the 59th floor. When in need, clients must leave the waiting area, exit security, return to the tenth floor, use the facilities, go through the security screening process again, and then return to the 59th floor. This is a great inconvenience, particularly for large families with small children waiting for immigrant visa interviews or passport services. It also causes processing delays waiting for clients to return to the 59th floor. There are restrooms on the 59th floor, which, with appropriate security modifications, could be used by the public.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Canberra should make the restrooms on the 59th floor of Consulate General Sydney accessible to consular clients. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Sydney's consular section is generously staffed with four ELOs and a mid-level supervisor, in addition to the country coordinator. However, as Sydney's consular section regularly provides TDY support to Melbourne and Perth, and assistance to nearby regional locations such as Port Moresby and Honiara, the staffing levels are appropriate for the workload. ELOs rotate among the units in the consular section in order to receive a full consular experience. There is relatively frequent turnover of

lower-ranking LE staff and delays in filling positions. The section is also providing LE staff TDY support to Embassy Baghdad. Together these factors have put a strain on the remaining LE staff.

American Citizen Services

At present, there are 41 U.S. citizens in prison in the district (27 in New South Wales and 14 in Queensland.) Staff time devoted to services for American citizens continues to grow. The consular section conducts quarterly visits to Brisbane and an annual visit to Cairns. These visits typically combine prison visits, provision of passport and notary services, and other outreach activities.

Visas

Consulate General Sydney processes all immigrant visas (IV) for Australia. In FY 2008 the office processed slightly under 1,700 immigrant visas.

The unit processes the full range of NIVs, including diplomatic and official visas for the Australian Government and the diplomatic community in Canberra. In FY 2008 Sydney processed slightly over 29,000 visa applications.

Separate IV and NIV units were combined into a single visa unit a year ago. This move is consistent with the growing convergence of the IV and NIV production process and, while there are still some adjustments being made, for the most part the change has gone smoothly and cooperatively. All LE staff have now been cross trained, and duties of various individuals have now changed to reflect this integration. However, none of the combined unit's position descriptions have been reviewed since the change went into effect.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Canberra should review the position descriptions for all locally employed staff in the visa unit at Consulate General Sydney and evaluate the positions for a possible change in grade if the duties have changed significantly. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Fraud Prevention Program

The section is in the process of filling a new local fraud prevention investigator position. This will match one recently established in Melbourne. Recommendations regarding coordination between these two positions are noted in the country coordination section above.

Canberra Consular Section

The consular section in Canberra offers no services to the public outside of emergency American citizen services (ACS). The primary function of the consular officer is to accept passport applications and notarize documents on behalf of the embassy community. The office also performs certain judicial services such as submission of letters rogatory and other instruments, which must be directed through the Australian central Government.

Staffing Issues

One part-time ELO manages consular operations in Canberra. On paper, the ELO position dedicates 50 percent of his time to consular work and the balance to political reporting functions, yet he actually spends four hours a week in the consular section and approximately five percent of his total time on consular duties. This allocation of time does not justify a consular position, which counts as the required consular tour for the ELO. Consulate General Sydney could send someone to Canberra every six weeks or so to provide passport and notary services, similar to the quarterly visits to Brisbane. This would also provide an added opportunity for face-to-face meetings between the consular coordinator and the DCM, or for ELOs to visit the embassy in Canberra. In addition, Embassy Canberra usually has several ELO positions, and, if any incumbent came from a prior consular assignment, Embassy Canberra could arrange with CA to have that person retain the existing consular commission in order to do notary services on behalf of the community. This would be on a case-by-case arrangement.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should eliminate position #30073004 as a consular-designated position. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with CA and EAP)

Consulate General Melbourne

Consulate General Melbourne has a small, busy consular operation responsible for several major Australian cities and a vast swath of territory between the northern and southern coasts of central Australia. The section conducts a robust outreach and circuit rider schedule to the major population centers outside of Melbourne, and has an excellent service orientation. The chief is an FS-02 officer who heads the ACS unit and assists in the NIV unit as needed. The section chief supervises one ELO, who is in charge of the NIV unit. Relations among the staff are professional and courteous, though more formal than is ideal in a small office environment. The first-tour ELO has been in Melbourne four months and has not yet mastered the basic consular skill set. He is not receiving sufficient detailed and useful feedback either on visa adjudication or decisionmaking, or on ways to enhance the visa process in Melbourne.

Staffing Issues

The workload in Consulate General Melbourne continues to grow slowly and steadily. The consulate is due to fill a new consular cashier position very soon, which will relieve a fee collection bottleneck and greatly smooth the existing visa process. Given the large territory and the demands of the dispersed American population, CA is considering assigning an additional ELO to Melbourne.

American Citizen Services

Services are handled on an appointment basis, mostly in the afternoons. At present, there are ten U.S. citizens in prison in three widely dispersed locations in the district. Staff time devoted to services for American citizens continues to grow. The consular section conducts periodic visits to Adelaide, Alice Springs, Hobart, and Darwin. These visits typically combine prison visits, provision of passport and notary services, and other outreach activities.

Nonimmigrant Visas

The unit processes the full range of NIVs on an appointment basis. In FY 2008 Melbourne processed slightly over 15,000 visa applications.

The visa services are handled on an appointment basis, mostly in the mornings. The process is a little disjointed due to the manner in which reciprocity fees are being collected pending the arrival of an additional consular cashier. This procedure and

other elements result in a large number of 221(g) temporary visa denials that have to be overcome later and often require new security checks. The OIG team made informal recommendations concerning this arrangement. The consular section recently enacted changes that should improve the process.

As noted above, the ELO unit chief needs closer guidance. A planned TDY trip to Sydney, where he can observe a larger operation and discuss matters with other colleagues, should help him in this regard. It may also help smooth out the noticeable visa refusal rate differences between the posts.

Melbourne is still in the process of reviewing and scanning Category One visa refusal files. The consular chief appreciates the need to finish this project and intends to complete it by the end of August 2009.

Fraud Prevention Program

The section recently filled a new local fraud prevention investigator position. This will match one soon to be established in Sydney. At present, the new investigator is still unsure about the parameters of his job. The Melbourne consular chief and the Melbourne fraud prevention officer together need to provide clearer guidance on the section's needs and expectations, including some standard operating procedures for handling cases referred to him and coordinating his part-time hours to mesh with the availability of the fraud prevention officer. The OIG team made an informal recommendation with regard to these matters. Recommendations regarding coordination between the investigator positions in Sydney and Melbourne are noted in the country coordination section above.

Consulate General Perth

The consular section in Consulate General Perth is a one-officer unit responsible for Western Australia. Under the outstanding leadership of its mid-level consular officer, the four LE staff members in the section conduct a full range of NIV and ACS work. There is a strong program that integrates prison visits and various consular-related trips with other outreach activities. The section as a whole has an excellent spirit of mutual support and customer service. The consular officer is well supported by the CG, who serves as his back-up.

Staffing Issues

The section in Perth appears correctly staffed for the workload. In addition to his consular duties, the consular chief is also responsible for a wide range of management and security functions.

American Citizen Services

Services are handled on an appointment basis. At present, there are three U.S. citizens in prison, though the number fluctuates between two and ten. Staff time devoted to services for American citizens continues to grow.

Nonimmigrant Visas

The unit processes the full range of NIVs on an appointment basis. In FY 2008 Perth processed approximately 4,000 visa applications.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

EMBASSY CANBERRA RESOURCES - FY 2008

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff *	U.S. Eligible Family Member Staff	Locally Employed Staff *	Total Staff	Total Funding	
State – Diplomatic and Consular Programs	70	4	41	115	\$7,775,000	(1)
State – ICASS	7	8	101	116	\$13,945,700	(2)
State – When-Actually-Employed Employees		9	13	22	\$0	(10)
State – Office of Building Operations	1	0	0	1	\$8,073,626	(3)
State – Regional Information Management Center	2	0	0	2	\$0	(11)
State – Diplomatic Security	9	1	21	31	\$3,051,688	(4)
State – Public Diplomacy	4	0	17	21	\$1,729,500	(5)
State – Marine Security Guard	6	0	4	10	\$287,750	
State – Representation	0	0	0	0	\$103,360	(6)
State – Consular	0	1	8	9	\$434,512	(7)
State – Gift Funds	0	0	0	0	\$ 90,720	
DOD – DAO (Defense Intelligence Agency/ Defense Attaché Office)	10	0	2	12	\$839,933	
Defense Intelligence Liaison Office	4	0	0	4	\$111,000	
Agriculture (FAS)	1	0	0	4	\$392,738	(12)
Foreign Commercial Service	2	0	11	13	\$1,197,919	
DOJ – Legal Attaché	9	0	0	9	\$683,750	

EMBASSY CANBERRA RESOURCES - FY 2008 (CONTINUED)

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff *	U.S. Eligible Family Member Staff	Locally Employed Staff *	Total Staff	Total Funding	
DOJ – Drug Enforcement Administration	3	0	1	4	\$72,000	
DHS – Exchange Officer	1	0	0	1	\$25,437	
DHS – Transport Security Administration	1	0	1	2	\$59,197	
USSS – Secret Service	1	0	2	3	\$5,875	
NGA – National Geospatial Intelligence Agency	12	4	0	16	\$198,147	
DOD – U.S. Army International Tech Center	1	0	0	1	\$9,549	
DOD – U.S. Navy	3	0	0	3	\$101,175	
DOD – 337th Air Support Flight Command & Judge-Advocate General	5	0	0	5	\$133,783	
DOD – Office of the Under-Secretary for Defense Policy	1	0	0	1	\$8,435	
DOD – Engineer & Scientist Exchange Program	3	0	0	3	\$13,487	
ODC – Office of Defense Cooperation	5	0	2	7	\$283,000	(13)
DOD – U.S. Navy – Personnel Exchange Program (PEP)	55	0	0	55	\$101,175	
DOD–U.S. Army – Personnel Exchange Program (PEP)	33	0	1	34	\$100,018	
DOD - U.S. Air Force – Personnel Exchange Program (PEP)	24	0	0	24	\$62,382	
DCMA – Defense Contract Management Agency	7	0	2	9	\$804,434	

EMBASSY CANBERRA RESOURCES - FY 2008 (CONTINUED)

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff *	U.S. Eligible Family Member Staff	Locally Employed Staff *	Total Staff	Total Funding	
DOD – Training & Doctrine Command	1	0	0	1	\$21,000	
DOD – Special Operations Command	2	0	0	2	\$10,963	
DOD – Special U.S. Liaison Office Canberra (SUSLOC)	29	3	0	32	\$910,000	
DOD – Force Protection Detachment	5	0	0	5	\$638,500	
DOD – weather station	11	0	0	11	\$0	(8)
DOD – APO	10	0	0	10	\$0	(9)
DOD – Royal Australian Air Force, Richmond, New South Wales	5	0	3	8	\$23,760	
DOD – Special Operations Command Pacific	1	0	0	0	\$7,080	
TOTAL	344	30	230	606	\$42,306,593	

* Note: Authorized positions throughout Mission Australia on 4/23/2009

- (1) Program funding includes start-up costs for two new political POL positions.
- (2) ICASS funding includes ICASS traditional bureau, local guard program, leases and prior year carry-over.
- (3) Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operation (OBO) funding includes leases, maintenance and repair, facilities management, special projects, and housing acquisitions.
- (4) Includes funding for two new Worldwide Security Upgrade positions, non-ICASS (DS) local guard program, and surveillance detection
- (5) Includes funding for educational advising
- (6) Includes funding for public diplomacy representation
- (7) Includes funding for machine readable visa, diversity visa, and fraud prevention programs
- (8) DOD – Weather Station is a classified agency.
- (9) Funding information was not available.
- (10) State – When-Actually-Employed employees are part of ICASS.
- (11) State – Regional Information Management Center is under Bangkok.
- (12) Agriculture – APHIS is included with Agriculture – FAS
- (13) Office of Defense Cooperation has two agencies – Defense Security Cooperation and Navy – Commander-in-Chief, Pacific

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Embassy Canberra is housed on a nine-acre compound in Canberra's diplomatic quarter, comprising six major buildings and several smaller support structures. Overall, the management section, under the leadership of its experienced section chief, does a commendable job coordinating support for the highly complex and far flung mission to Australia. Management uses videoconferencing technology effectively to communicate with and include constituent posts in the decisionmaking process.

Constituent posts visited by inspection teams reported they had excellent communications with the management section in Canberra. All reported adequate funding, including representation funds, to perform their duties.

Department funds from all sources total approximately \$35,000,000, and the total funding for the mission, including Department of Defense entities, is approximately \$43,000,000.

Consulate General Sydney Management Overview

Administrative services at Consulate General Sydney are effective, efficient, and meet Department regulations in every section. The addition of two officers, one regional security officer and one general services officer (GSO), provides support to the formerly overburdened management officer. The three form a strong service-oriented team supporting 38 U.S. direct-hire staff. There are 70 LE staff. If the consulate grows larger, improving service delivery will likely require more staff.

More communication between the Embassy and consulate would improve cohesion and understanding of the issues faced by both facilities. The newly formed Sydney LE staff committee potentially can function as a conduit for communicating staff concerns to its counterparts and management at the Embassy. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that Embassy Canberra make quarterly management visits to Sydney and meet with all sections and agencies. The LE staff in Sydney perceive inconsistencies among sections in the application of the consulate's policy on flextime. The OIG team raised this with Embassy and consulate management.

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

The most serious issue facing management is increasing ICASS staff to keep pace with the rapid growth of the mission. The ICASS council is comprised of six agencies, with 35 individual serviced agencies for ICASS billing. Since 2007, the ICASS council has met primarily for budget and billing issues. ICASS council meetings are held irregularly. Since 2001, ICASS U.S. direct-hire staff decreased by one, and the non-ICASS staff increased by nearly 200. LE ICASS staff increased by six while overall LE staff, also ICASS customers, increased by 31.

Management of ICASS resources has been efficient. The ratio of ICASS staff to U.S. direct-hire staff in Australia is one of the lowest worldwide. In some areas, the inspection team observed that the workload clearly justifies adding ICASS staff. The team learned that recent proposals for additional staff have stalled due to post ICASS council inaction. The impasse was not resolved at post via the procedures outlined in 6 FAH-5 H-220 (ICASS Handbook). The inspectors found a lack of familiarity with 6 FAH-5, and determined that a visit by an ICASS training team provides the best route to establish an effective partnership between service providers and subscribers. It is difficult to build a consensus when the members do not fully understand the ICASS program. Building consensus could be facilitated through training in ICASS procedures and responsibilities. Funding a training team trip from ICASS carryover would be justified.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should request and support a visit by an International Cooperative Administrative Support Services training team. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with EAP)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Canberra should require that International Cooperative Administrative Support Services providers update their proposals for staff increases and resubmit them for consideration by the mission International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

The mission's TDY policy is up to date with Department requirements and available on the mission website. The impact from TDY visitors is not significant as most TDY visitors use few services, and are supported by agencies at post. The financial

office is usually sent information on the e-country clearance system and requires travel orders to perform ICASS services such as cashiering. ICASS service providers prepare monthly data to ensure accuracy. Management needs to submit workload counts to the finance section for ICASS billing purposes. The OIG team discussed with management having ICASS service providers attend the ICASS council meetings.

The integration of ICASS standards within the Uniform Performance Service Standards, part of the Collaborative Management Initiative is to be completed in 2009. The worldwide platform is designed to ensure that consistent, cost-effective, high-quality service standards replace post-specific service standards. The ICASS council in December 2008 voted to adopt the Collaborative Management Initiative service standards.

Financial Management

An experienced Foreign Service officer leads the capable financial management staff. The LE deputy manager, senior budget analyst, and LE certifying examiner lead a team of efficient, service-oriented analysts and voucher examiners. Despite staff shortages due to illness, cross training in positions has improved continuity in support of mission operational goals. The financial management center enjoys the confidence of mission staff who rated financial services the highest in the mission on an OIG pre-inspection survey.

Regional support responsibilities are expanding as Embassy Port Moresby grows and requires more financial services from Embassy Canberra. Staffing in Canberra is now barely adequate to meet current needs and must be monitored to ensure future increases in regional workload are supported by staffing increases.

Funds management includes monthly reviews of unliquidated obligations, according to 4 FAM 087.2 a. (4), and results in timely recoveries. This is not a small task with over 19,000 vouchers processed annually. Electronic fund transfers pay almost 90 percent. Most categories of service on the ICASS satisfaction survey exceeded the bureau and worldwide average. In particular, the rating for processing of vouchers was one of the best seen by inspectors in several years.

The current superior service may be disrupted as travel management, E2 Solutions, is scheduled for implementation in July just as fourth quarter spending begins. According to current information, the search engine to link reservations from the American Express travel service with E2 is not in place. Training is due to begin in July for travel authorizations, but processing vouchers will be delayed pending the

search engine implementation. The inspectors strongly urge the mission to delay future training and implementation until after the end of the fiscal year. July is also the summer transfer season and a partial system distracts finance staff from providing efficient travel voucher processing.

Facilities Management

The facilities management unit, headed by a U.S. direct-hire facilities manager with a crew of 19 LE staff, has responsibility for government-owned properties throughout the mission. In addition to the embassy compound in Canberra, these include the principal officers' residences in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth, and 49 government-owned dwellings in Canberra. The facilities manager visited the constituent posts two times since arriving eight months earlier.

The routine maintenance and repair budget for FY 2009 was reported to be approximately \$600,000. There are no plans for special maintenance and repair. The ongoing projects for improving Canberra's government-owned housing focus on energy saving and other green technologies. Recent upgrades to government-owned housing in Canberra included rooftop-mounted solar water heaters, rainwater collection systems, and double-glazed windows.

The facilities manager reported that he personally follows up with general services and financial management to confirm that unliquidated obligations are deobligated at the time of contract closeout. Financial services confirmed a close working relationship. Approximately half of routine maintenance funds for 2009 were not obligated at the time of inspection, although a spending plan was in place for the remaining funds.

The location of the PAS in an off-compound, leased building, was the subject of comment in the 2003 inspection report. OBO has designed a new building on the Embassy Canberra compound to house PAS.

While in Canberra, the inspection team observed a videoconference on the subject of the PAS building, between concerned parties in OBO Washington and the Embassy. The team was favorably impressed by the obvious sense of partnership and close cooperation between the two participating teams. The OBO design team provided extensive background, including illustrations, documenting the research into Williamsburg and Georgian architecture which informs its designs. Significant effort has gone into ensuring the final design protects and blends with the existing compound's architectural fabric. For its part, Canberra's facilities management office demonstrated initiative in locating a brickyard capable of producing bricks with the

same dimensions as the original 1940s bricks used in earlier buildings. Such attention to detail was clearly high on priority lists in both Canberra and Washington, and demonstrated the shared sense of responsibility for preserving this historic property.

General Services

An experienced American officer has headed the general services unit since August 2007 when he transferred from the human resources (HR) office in Manila. The unit has an off-compound warehouse; all other GSO personnel work in two support buildings on the embassy compound.

Housing

Inspectors concluded from interviews and questionnaires that housing is one of the most important morale issues among U.S. direct-hires at the Embassy. Concerns ranged from disappointment with the size, quality, and location of housing to the need to spend time in temporary quarters and the quality of maintenance provided by landlords. There was a general feeling, however, that the situation is improving. Under the leadership of the management counselor, GSO, and OBO, the Embassy has made progress in acquiring new housing and improving communication with employees on housing issues; this is a sensitive area and bears continued monitoring by embassy leadership.

GSO developed an outreach effort to provide information on housing assignments earlier in the transfer process. Housing preference questionnaires, as well as other information, are sent to newcomers prior to arrival. GSO gave its post arrival housing orientation presentation during the inspection, which inspectors were able to attend. The presentation is a thorough explanation of the housing program, including details such as contact information for the residential security coordinator, trash collection and recycling arrangements, pest control and integrated pest management, work order procedures and effective work order tips, safety equipment, and emergency contact information. Information on unaccompanied air baggage and household effects arrangements, and the shipping and customs unit was included in the presentation.

The housing assistant is an LE staff member with five years of experience at the Embassy. The assistant publishes a quarterly housing newsletter. The newsletter format works well for circulating seasonal announcements relating to housing, news of pending changes (e.g., Australia's switch to energy saving light bulbs), housing-related

policies and short articles on the proper operation of smoke detectors. The newsletter appears to be an efficient way to disseminate housing-related information to the target audience throughout their respective tours.

Inspectors also attended an interagency housing board meeting in Canberra. Discussions were informed and collegial. The GSO provided a chart showing newcomers' expected arrival dates as well as housing availability. The chair showed skill in keeping the discussions focused, and the meeting concluded in less than one hour.

Procurement

The GSO procurement unit is working toward a paperless office. Procurement actions are initiated in the Integrated Logistics Management System Arriba Acquisitions module. Supporting documentation is digitized and attached to the electronic file. When the acquisition is approved for payment and forwarded to the financial management unit, the procurement staff retains only the electronic file. The procurement and financial management units work collaboratively to maximize the efficiency of the purchase card program. The financial management center sets a monthly limit for each cardholder for program and ICASS expenditures. Paper documentation for each transaction is attached to the monthly statement and forwarded to the financial management center on a monthly basis.

Canberra uses a small number of blanket purchase agreements for repetitive acquisitions. Procurement discussed these with a management inspector. The files were reviewed and no internal control problems were noted.

Canberra is having difficulty getting a new local guard contract competition and selection underway. In late 2008, Canberra was asked to participate in a program wherein the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) and the Bureau of Administration's Office of Logistics Management would compete and award the local guard contract for Australia. Canberra's experience with the new process has been frustrating, primarily for the following reasons: the representative who visited post did not communicate the process well; communications from the Bureau of Administration's Office of Acquisitions Management to Canberra have been confusing; post is now working with a one-year extension to its guard contract, when it expected it would now have a new contract; an equitable price adjustment claim has been outstanding for 18 months, creating a continuing, unresolved issue between post and its guard contractor. Post personnel reported some improvement in information flow from Washington during the inspection.

Human Resources

The HR section is thinly staffed to serve the daily workload, regional HR requirements, and management projects. The senior LE HR supervisor resigned to take a position with the Australian Government; another HR supervisor just returned from sick leave; an HR assistant is on sick leave, and three other HR assistant/clerks are in their first year with the Embassy. The regional human resources officer is experienced and knowledgeable but faces a substantial workload serving the mission, with three consulates, as well as Port Moresby and Suva. Canberra also provides Computer Assisted Job Evaluation service to Koror, Kolonia, Majuro, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and French Polynesia.

Training is scheduled for two LE staff to meet Computer Assisted Job Evaluation requirements, and a retired Foreign Service officer assists with special projects in human resources. However, basic data input for two Department systems (e-QIP for security clearances and HR ONLINE for proposed itineraries), the updated dependents list (OF126), and ePerformance require an American officer. LE staff could be empowered to do more, but these relatively new systems preclude delegating responsibility and increase the workload on the human resources officer. Mission Australia and the three consulates carry a sufficient workload for one human resources officer.

Recommendation 14: The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs should review human resource staffing within the region and reassign regional human resources responsibilities at Embassy Canberra to other missions. (Action: EAP)

The HR office, as a source for advice and counsel, plays an important role in the morale of the Embassy. There is no privacy in the crowded Canberra HR offices, which to some staff resemble broom closets. The Embassy will provide additional space for the HR office in the next 60 days by relocating offices of another agency. An informal recommendation was made to assign special projects to other officers than the regional HR officer.

Locally Employed Staff

The LE staff's executive committee is active and met with the inspectors. The inspectors also participated in a wrap-up meeting via digital videoconference with representatives of the executive committee, LE staff in Melbourne, and the Consulate Sydney LE staff executive committee. The inspectors have addressed many of the LE staff concerns in the report and are following up on others.

Locally Employed Staff Empowerment and Security Clearances

Mission Australia has several LE staff members – American, dual nationals, and Australian – with the potential to expand their responsibilities, but who cannot be fully utilized because they do not have security clearances. These cases suggest a need for a more definitive review of the granting of clearances.

The Consulate General Melbourne management officer is an LE staff member who has worked for the consulate for 11 years, taking on the responsibility as well as a title generally reserved for a Foreign Service officer. Demonstrating its high regard, the Department designated her in a pilot program to bear a \$26,000 purchase card, a limit far beyond what American officers receive. Despite this expression of trust, she is not eligible for a security clearance. Therefore, she cannot supervise the consulate's post security officer and information program officer, leaving the CG with direct supervisory responsibility of a specialized, technical function. Most principal officers at a post of Melbourne's complexity would not normally carry out such supervision. The management officer also is not allowed access to some of the Department's primary HR information systems.

Australian Government officials are allowed to work in secure areas in the State Department and elsewhere in Washington based on their Australian clearances. It is unlikely, however, that the government of Australia, would grant (and therefore pay for) a security clearance for a consulate LE staff member, because her work in the consulate does not benefit the Australian Government. The U.S. Government may not feel it is appropriate or practical for it to carry out clearances for foreign nationals. In light of the close bilateral security cooperation and benefits to the consulate accrued, if an Australian clearance would suffice, the Department and government of Australia may be able to implement a special cooperative clearance process for such cases. The U.S. Government could pay for an Australian clearance for the employee, if the advantages were compelling.

Even a U.S. citizen may be limited in his/her contributions without a security clearance. The Embassy Canberra media specialist is an American citizen with dual nationality. She has worked for the Embassy for six years and is trusted as an architect of mission media strategies. She even speaks on the record to reporters – a role almost always reserved for officers. Nevertheless, she cannot use her expertise to the fullest without a clearance that would allow her to work with classified information, if its projected release would cause media controversy requiring an embassy response.

The Consulate General Perth LE economic assistant is an American citizen in the process of applying for dual nationality. She is highly regarded for her expertise and contributions to economic reporting. The position does not require a security clearance; however, both the LE assistant and CG feel it would be useful for her to have access to classified material on economic issues and on Muslim issues, another element in her portfolio.

A dual national seeking to qualify for a U.S. security clearance must sign a “Do Not Exercise Memorandum,” which pledges that the applicant will not exercise specific responsibilities and benefits of foreign citizenship. If an item on the list is required by national law, however, this is noted in the applicant’s dossier for DS’s adjudication of the candidate’s suitability. The list includes military service, voting in foreign elections, use of a foreign passport, and other actions. Included in this list as well is, “accept educational, medical, and other benefits from a foreign country.”

Australian law requires its citizens to vote; therefore, dual nationals would not lose these privileges when signing the form required for a security clearance. Nevertheless, an initial review of the list raises the question of the relevance to the security clearance of a candidate’s accepting educational and medical benefits.

In addition, the OIG team encountered uncertainty among mission staff about the eligibility of their dual national staff to apply for security clearances. A review of requirements and procedures for clearances for dual nationals would provide dual national embassy staff with a clearer idea of their eligibility for a security clearance.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Mission Australia’s EEO program includes three consulates, and conducts its EEO program in full compliance with Department procedures. Section 1514.2 of 3 FAM encourages the chief of mission to appoint an EEO counselor at a post with more than 50 employees, including LE staff. Counselors approved by the Office of Civil Rights are responsible for receiving and attempting to resolve, on an informal basis, matters of alleged discrimination. Two consulates do not meet the criteria for an on-site counselor and are monitored by the EEO counselor in Canberra. EEO counselors in Canberra and the consulate in Sydney have received necessary training. No grievances were expressed to OIG or on file. The Federal Women’s Program Manager at the consulate in Sydney covers issues at the embassy and constituent posts.

The Embassy should identify at least one non-American LE staff liaison for EEO issues. Some consulates include LE staff as ex-officio counselors and others do not. The inspectors informally recommend that Embassy Canberra include LE staff as EEO liaison.

Video training programs in Canberra are planned and employees in Perth and Melbourne will participate remotely. Bulletin boards provide up-to-date and useful EEO information, but are not a substitute for formal presentations. Consulate Sydney is setting up bulletin boards and planning video training.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY

Embassy Canberra operates a comprehensive information management (IM) and information systems security program. The current information management office effectively manages all of the embassy's IM and security requirements. The OIG team assessed all procedures and systems documentation, and performed random checks of the embassy's files. The information technology posture of the embassy is adequate. Additional discussion of the mission's IM management and security is found in the classified annex to this report.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The IM staff at Embassy Canberra provides unclassified and classified systems operational support for approximately 238 workstations, 14 servers, and 270 user accounts on the unclassified side, and 46 workstations, nine servers, and 87 classified user accounts. The IM staff supports operations in the chancery as well as provides regional support for Consulates General Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth. The LE staff assists with unclassified operations, telephone functions, mailroom, and receptionist duties.

Consulate General Sydney's IM staff is comprised of an information program officer and information management specialist, and two LE staff providing unclassified support of 39 workstations, six servers, and 51 users. There are five classified workstations, six classified servers, and 26 user accounts.

Consulate General Melbourne's IM staff is comprised of one information program officer, a part-time office management specialist, a political officer as information system security officer, and three LE staff providing unclassified support to 39 workstations, six servers, and 51 users. They also provide mail and receptionist support. There are three classified workstations, five servers, and seven users.

Consulate General Perth's IM staff is comprised of one LE staff providing unclassified support of 34 workstations, four servers, and 45 users. There are two classified workstations supported by a cleared American IM staff member. The IM LE staff member learned the IM systems through on-the-job training, but has not been kept current on required systems training. The OIG team made an informal recommendation on this matter.

INFORMATION SECURITY

Embassy Canberra's cleared American IM staff is performing adequate information system security officer duties. The IM staff checks for inappropriate materials, ensures patches and templates are applied, reviews audit logs, and responds quickly to any incidents.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Community Liaison Office

Embassy Canberra's two energetic and committed part-time co-community liaison office (CLO) coordinators split the duties of the position. Evaluations on the OIG questionnaires and comments from personal interviews during the inspection show that their involvement in community activities is appreciated. They serve almost 600 dependents countrywide, and are experts on Canberra schools, the housing market, and medical facilities. This information is useful in welcoming incoming staff, who receive detailed email information on life in Canberra once they are assigned. For many of the newly arrived staff, life is difficult in Australia because it differs from the United States in housing standards, educational systems, etc., despite its developed status.

The assignment of housing affects the school selection, and with a tight housing market, assignments are often late. As a result, the CLO coordinators act as advocates for school placement. Assisting with family member employment takes time and often does not result in placement as the cost of hiring help or day care is prohibitive. Currently 19 family members work in the mission and 17 on the local economy. The CLO coordinators also publish a weekly newsletter, organize community activities, and participate in the country team, the emergency action committee, the housing board, and interviews for hiring family members.

Medical

The medical unit in Canberra, which is staffed part-time and provides referrals and some immunizations, gets mixed reviews as care in Australia is excellent, but access is difficult. Until immunizations were allowed, the unit's role was strictly for occupational injuries. In the past year there were three medical evacuations and nine hospitalizations in Canberra. Referral to Sydney for specialists is common. A regional medical officer and regional psychiatrist make quarterly visits. The Office of Medical Services is considering adding a regional medical officer or a nurse practitioner for regional responsibility for New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. Safe haven supplies are inventoried and were updated in March 2009 to include a stock of the antiviral drug Tamiflu.

The list of local medical practitioners is not comprehensive. New arrivals must locate a local general practitioner or specialist, although once they are in the system, the care is very good. The consulates' staffs often call the part-time embassy nurse for referral advice. The OIG team made informal recommendations that the Embassy develop a policy for referrals for all consulates and that it consider expanding the part-time nurse position to full-time.

Mission Australia is a prime follow-on assignment for Iraq/Afghanistan and other high stress posts. Adjustment from stressful assignments is at present not an issue according to mission management. In April 2008, the regional psychiatrist presented a post traumatic stress disorder PowerPoint presentation. Three high stress returnees attended. Other returnees informed management they did not have any adjustment problems and therefore did not attend. Officers from a variety of sections who were not high risk returnees did attend to learn more about the issue.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

OMB Circular A-123 defines management's responsibility for internal controls in Federal agencies issued under the authority of the Federal Manager's Financial Integrity Act of 1982, codified in 31 U.S.C. 3512. In response to this requirement, Embassy Canberra's 2008 chief of mission certification submitted to the Department listed no significant vulnerabilities related to internal controls. Each consulate submitted a certification to the Embassy sent in with the annual embassy submission. The certification ensures personal property assets are inventoried, reconciled, and reported, and the assignment of residential properties and data submissions for the real property application system are in place.

The inspection team reviewed internal controls throughout the mission and found no major problems. The management counselor at Embassy Canberra is designated as the embassy's management controls coordinator.

Financial Management

Financial operations comply with applicable laws and regulations and as a result internal controls are generally effective. Controls over the use of premium travel are in place. No first class tickets have been issued in the last year, and business class tickets are not usually issued except for medical reasons. One ticket was issued in the last year, and was approved by EAP.

Consular Management

The inspection team's review of the consular management controls across Australia found them to be in very good shape. Access into the consular sections is controlled. Accountable items, for the most part, are well identified and secured; however, in Canberra the accountable consular officer failed to do a physical check of the accountable items when he accepted responsibility and an impression seal is missing. Corrective action and a search are now underway. Accountable consular officers are appropriately designated. A mission visa referral policy is in place. Consular cashier operations are closely supervised. Access to consular automated systems is managed closely. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that back-up consular cashiers be scheduled to serve as cashiers on a regular basis, in order to stay current with the cashiering system and procedures.

Consular cashier operations in Australia are suffering from an interface problem with the website www.pay.gov. This problem periodically causes credit card payments to be double-charged against consular clients. The Office of Consular Systems and Technology is working to resolve this problem, which has resulted in considerable irritation to the clients, additional work for the financial management units, and caused some consular sections to stop accepting credit card payments.

The one management control area which bears closer attention is the adjudication review of visa decisions being carried out in various locations in Australia per 9 FAM 41.113. In Melbourne, the CG failed to review the consular chief's adjudications for several months. When TDY help is assigned from Consulate General Sydney to Consulate General Melbourne or Consulate General Perth, supervising officers often fail to review those TDY officers' adjudications. The country coordinator occasionally adjudicates visa applications, but the Sydney CG is not always aware of the fact and has not reviewed those decisions. The country coordinator could monitor which officers are adjudicating visas at which posts in Australia and whether the decisions are being appropriately reviewed using the NIV adjudication review report available on-line. He could then remind reviewers when they fail to carry out their required duties.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Canberra should assign the consular country coordinator to run and review the nonimmigrant visa adjudication review report in the consular consolidated database for all Australia consular sections at least once a month. (Action: Embassy Canberra.)

Representation and Official Residence Expenses

Representation vouchers and official residence expenses vouchers were reviewed and met regulations. Consulates prepare representation vouchers for processing at the Embassy. There were delays in collecting off-setting contributions in one consulate for eight months last year. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the Embassy develop a post policy on procedures for processing official residence expenses. With staff turnover at three consulates, the mission would improve its controls if it provided a handy reference to new staff and issue an internal control reminder for the voucher processing unit at the Embassy.

Canberra and the constituent posts do not maintain extensive motor pools. Vehicles can be checked out on a self-drive basis for official business. Drivers are responsible for completing and signing the daily logs. The GSO stated that drivers are cooperative and supportive of the system. A sample of records was reviewed and no internal controls issues were noted.

Warehouse/Property Management

Inspectors visited Canberra's government-owned warehouse, which is also the site of the alternate command center. The warehouse operation is clean and impressive in appearance. Good safety practices are apparent, including the obligatory wearing of high-visibility vests when walking in the warehouse operating areas. The warehouse utilizes steel rack systems to maximize capacity within its footprint. A sale area is designated for the placement of property undergoing disposal. X-ray equipment is installed at the warehouse and is used by authorized personnel to inspect items as required.

Expendable supplies are minimal. Office supply stores with standard stock can supply all but specialized expendables. Property records from the Integrated Logistics Management System were randomly selected and no discrepancies were found.

Inventory Controls

The annual inventory meets Department standards. At the consulate in Sydney, a random selection of nonexpendable items were matched with the quantities recorded on the inventory report, and the motor vehicle inventory was correct and reported to the Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Embassy Canberra should develop a mission public diplomacy operational plan incorporating each constituent post's more detailed plan specifying priority messages, audiences, and target institutions. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Canberra should establish a monthly meeting between the consular country coordinator and the deputy chief of mission to discuss countrywide consular activities. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Recommendation 3: Embassy Canberra should hold biweekly phone conferences, hosted by the consular country coordinator, with all consular chiefs in Australia, to discuss specific and countrywide consular trends. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Canberra should hold quarterly digital videoconferences, hosted by the consular country coordinator, that include direct-hire American and locally employed staff are included. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Canberra should establish standard operating procedures and operational guidelines for the newly established fraud prevention investigator positions in Consulates General Sydney and Melbourne. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Canberra should make the restrooms on the 59th floor of Consulate General Sydney accessible to consular clients. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Recommendation 7: Embassy Canberra should review the position descriptions for all locally employed staff in the visa unit at Consulate General Sydney and evaluate the positions for a possible change in grade if the duties have changed significantly. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should eliminate position #30073004 as a consular-designated position. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with CA and EAP)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should retain the existing locally employed consular staff. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with CA and EAP)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Canberra should assign the consular country coordinator in Sydney to rate the locally employed staff positions in the consular section after the entry-level officer consular position #30073004 is eliminated. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with CA and EAP)

Recommendation 11: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Canberra, should not replace the existing consular server at the next scheduled hardware replacement. Consular automated systems in Canberra should be supported by the consular server at the Consulate General in Sydney. (Action: CA, in coordination with Embassy Canberra.)

Recommendation 12: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should request and support a visit by an International Cooperative Administrative Support Services training team. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with EAP)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Canberra should require that International Cooperative Administrative Support Services providers update their proposals for staff increases and resubmit them for consideration by the mission International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Recommendation 14: The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs should review human resource staffing within the region and reassign regional human resources responsibilities at Embassy Canberra to other missions. (Action: EAP)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Canberra should assign the consular country coordinator to run and review the nonimmigrant visa adjudication review report in the consular consolidated database for all Australia consular sections at least once a month. (Action: Embassy Canberra.)

Recommendation 16: Embassy Canberra should review the use of accommodation exchange at the mission and justify providing service where automated teller machines are available. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover operational matters not requiring action by organizations outside the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau. Informal recommendations will not be subject to the OIG compliance process. However, any subsequent OIG inspection or on-site compliance review will assess the mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

There is no formal ELO program at the mission. Although some ELOs receive considerable attention and opportunities, others, particularly in consular sections, could use more exposure to broader mission operations and more senior level attention.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Canberra should provide opportunities for entry level officers to participate in country team meetings and digital video conferences and to receive more mentoring and other attention from top management, for example, through quarterly meetings, individually, or as a group.

The consular sections in Sydney, and to a lesser extent Melbourne, are, by their layout and function, more isolated from the other sections of the consulates general.

Informal Recommendations 2: Embassy Canberra should require that top management devote more attention to locally employed and U.S. direct-hire consulate staff, particularly in Melbourne and Sydney, to better integrate them into the overall work of the consulates general.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SECTIONS

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's evaluation process is not the basis for promotion, unlike the Department's evaluation process. Thus, employee evaluation reports of officers detailed to DFAT may not fully reflect their readiness for promotion.

Informal recommendation 3: Embassy Canberra should review and modify the evaluation practice for Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's detailees to maximize their career benefit from the detail.

Embassy Canberra lacks sufficient capacity to cover ESTH issues to fulfill its MSP goal.

Informal recommendation 4: Embassy Canberra should continue to seek environment, science, technology, and health training for the economic section's locally employed staff.

Public Diplomacy

Mission Australia FY 2011 MSP's "Goal #5: Reinforcing Success: Promoting Public Support for the Alliance" is to be judged on "Performance Indicator #2: Reduction in level of anti-American sentiment among foreign key audiences." This performance indicator does not take sufficient account of the effect of external factors upon Australian public opinion and therefore is not an appropriate measure of mission public diplomacy success.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Canberra should discontinue use of the performance indicator geared to anti-American sentiment when drafting its next Mission Strategic Plan.

The mission's consular sections work well with their public diplomacy counterparts. The consular sections support PAS educational exchange activities. PAS helps the consular sections manage their media relations. Mission Australia's political and economic officers help brief visiting American exchange groups, participate in Fulbright scholarship selection committees, and give speeches to Australian audiences. Although PAS Canberra helps arrange public speaking opportunities, the officers often make their own arrangements.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Canberra should require that the public affairs section issue standard operating procedures for cooperation with its economic and political section counterparts on speeches and other public diplomacy activities.

Consular Activities

Panel physicians in cities around Australia conduct visa-related examinations, but consular staff have not visited many of them for years. They need to do so to verify that the physicians are conducting their examinations according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Canberra should require that the consular country coordinator establish and implement a regular schedule of visits to panel physicians throughout Australia.

The Melbourne office is due to receive a new consular cashier. In the meantime, the existing part-time consular cashier was assigned alternate duties in the mornings. This meant that he could not collect visa fees, and visa applicants who needed to pay reciprocity fees had to exit the consulate, go several blocks to the nearest post office to buy a money order, return to the consulate and go through security processing again to drop off the money order. This procedure and other elements resulted in a large number of 221(g) temporary visa denials that had to later be overcome and often required new security checks, adding delays and additional work to the visa process.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Canberra should take the existing part-time cashier in Melbourne out of the standard locally employed staff rotation and assign him to respond to incoming phone and email inquiries from within the cashier cage and accept nonimmigrant visa reciprocity fees as needed. When the new cashier position is filled, this arrangement can be reexamined.

The Melbourne consular section recently filled a new local fraud prevention investigator position. At present the new investigator is still unsure about the parameters of his job. He does not have clear guidance on the section's needs and expectations.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Canberra should establish clear standard operating procedures for the fraud investigator in Melbourne. The guidance should include the correct handling of various types of cases referred to him and coordinating his part-time hours to mesh with the availability of the fraud prevention officer.

Mission Australia's consular section back-up consular cashiers perform their duties only intermittently, when the principal cashier is ill or on leave. When the absence is unexpected, the back-up cashiers often have trouble remembering procedures, or even their passwords to access the necessary consular systems.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Canberra should schedule all mission back-up consular cashiers to serve as cashiers on a regular basis to stay current with cashiering systems and procedures.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Consulate General Sydney has a large number of LE staff but does not have the same level of access to HR services as Embassy Canberra is given.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Canberra should develop a program for human resources and other service providers to conduct quarterly visits to all consulates general as needed.

The mission is large and often has special projects or a pilot program or needs to write a special report. These projects are often tasked to the regional human resources officer, who also receives taskings from other embassies as part of its regional support.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Canberra should assign special projects to other Foreign Service officers who would benefit from exposure to projects outside their areas of expertise.

The Embassy and consulates do not have a current list of available physicians and medical specialists.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Canberra should review and update the list of physicians, clinics, and hospitals for the embassy and consulates general.

The part-time nurse position at the Embassy is required to handle emergencies for the embassy and consulates across a continent with varying time zones.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Canberra should review the duties of the part-time nurse position to determine if the position should be full-time.

The EEO program is active at the mission but does not formally have an LE staff member to act as ex-officio counselor.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Canberra should include locally employed staff as ex-officio counselors in the mission Equal Employment Opportunity program.

Newly arrived staff at the Embassy and consulates often do not understand procedures for processing official residence expenses and contributions.

Informal Recommendations 16: Embassy Canberra should develop and disseminate a mission official residence expenses policy to newly arrived staff.

Consulate General Perth's IM LE staff member has had only on-the-job training.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Canberra should provide more training opportunities to the information management locally employed staff at Consulate General Perth.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Name	Arrival	Date
Ambassador	(Vacant)	
Deputy Chief of Mission	Daniel A. Clune	02/07

Chiefs of Sections:

Administrative	Christopher R. Riche	07/08
Political	James F. Cole	09/06
Economic	Edgard D. Kagen	08/07
Public Affairs	Scott Weinhold	08/06
Regional Security	Julie S. Cabus	05/08

Other Agencies:

Department of Defense	Andrew J. Britschgi (Senior Defense Officer)	06/07
Foreign Agricultural Service	Grant A. Pettrie	07/08
Foreign Commercial Service (Sydney)	David J. Murphy	09/07
Federal Bureau of Investigation	(Vacant)	08/07
Drug Enforcement Administration	Emmett R. Highland	09/07
Secret Service (Sydney)	Jeffrey A. Shelton	03/09
Transportation Security Administration (Sydney)	Jill Drury	09/08

Constituent Posts

Consulate General Melbourne	Michael E. Thurston	09/08
Consulate General Perth	Kenneth S. Chern	08/07
Consulate General Sydney	Judith R. Fergin	07/07
Consular Country Coordinator (Sydney)	Thurmond H. Borden	06/08

ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American citizen services
ATM	Automated teller machine
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CG	Consul general
CLO	Community liaison office
CPAO	Country public affairs officer
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
Department	Department of State
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DOD	Department of Defense
DS	Bureau of Diplomatic Security
EAP	Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
ECA	Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ELO	Entry-level officer
ESTH	Environment, science, technology, and health
HR	Human resources
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
ISSO	Information system security officer
IV	Immigrant visas
LE	Locally employed

LNIV	Laptop nonimmigrant visa system
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NIV	Nonimmigrant visas
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAS	Public affairs section
PAO	Public affairs officer
TDY	Temporary duty

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