

nal report on Contracting Out is expected early next year.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Discussion Paper when published or the Issues Paper, please contact the Council Secretariat on tel (02) 6247 5100.

Further information on this project can be obtained from the Council's Director of Research, Philippa Lynch on tel (02) 6247 5100.

### *Internal Review*

Taking up the interest expressed in this subject during its inquiry into merits review tribunals, the Council has commenced a project to assist Commonwealth agencies by developing a best practice guide for internal review.

Internal review is a review on the merits of a Commonwealth government agency's primary decision that is undertaken by another officer within the same agency (usually a more senior officer). Internal review can take a number of forms and agencies may have more than one system of internal review – for example, an agency may administer a number of statutory schemes (eg Tariff Concessions and Freedom of Information schemes) as well as having systems for review of various non-statutory decisions. The Council's project is not concerned directly with how agencies handle complaints generally but is restricted to review of decisions. The Council's project will not cover internal review of an agency's own personnel matters.

The first stage of the project will be a pilot study that would look at a range of internal review systems in five agencies. The Department of Social Security and Centrelink (in relation to the Social Security Act matters), the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Health and Family Services and the Australian Customs Service have all kindly agreed to participate in the pilot study. The agencies concerned undertake a broad range of functions and programs and have in place a variety of statutory and non-statutory internal review mechanisms ranging from the more common

FOI arrangements to decisions on rights and entitlements.

To help clarify the methodology to be used for the pilot study, the Council invited a number of persons and organisations to tender for development of a methodology paper. Professor Spencer Zifcak from La Trobe University was the successful tenderer and has produced a paper which is now under consideration by the Council.

It is expected that the pilot study would also be undertaken by an external consultant, possibly working together with the Secretariat of the Council. The Secretariat will also be supporting the project through research and the production of papers to assist the Council and consultants in furthering the project.

The contact officer for this project is the Council's Deputy Director of Research, Sue Bromley on tel (02) 62475100.

## **Administrative Appeals Tribunal**

### **New jurisdictions**

The following legislation, which has been passed since the last edition of *Admin Review*, conferred jurisdiction on the AAT, or altered existing AAT jurisdiction:

*Aged Care Act 1997*

*Aged Care Income Testing Act 1997*

*Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Regulations (Amendment)*

*Airports (Building Control) Regulations (Amendment)*

*Airports (Control of On-Airport Activities) Regulations*

*Airports Regulations (Amendment)*

*Australian Wool Research and Promotion Organisation (Postal Ballots) Regulations*

*Communications Legislation Amendment Act (No.1) 1997*