



Including Student Assistance Decisions

## Opinion

### Administrative Review Council Review of Tribunals

The SSAT is at present the subject of a review announced by the Minister for Social Security, Senator Jocelyn Newman, last December, and currently being conducted by Dame Margaret Guilfoyle. However, it appears that this may be superseded by the recent announcement made in Parliament by the Commonwealth Attorney-General that the amalgamation of the Veteran's Review Board, the Social Security Appeals Tribunal, the Immigration Review Tribunal, the Refugee Review Tribunal and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, as recommended in the *Better Decisions* report of the Administrative Review Council, has been agreed to in principle by Cabinet. The *Better Decisions* report recommended the establishment of a new tribunal, the Administrative Review Tribunal, having separate divisions.

Further, on 20 March 1997, the Minister for Immigration announced the establishment of an Interdepartmental Committee chaired by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, to develop an appropriate implementation

strategy. It is understood that this Committee is to report by the end of June. Although it remains unclear as to when it is anticipated the new Administrative Review Tribunal will be in operation, it seems likely that this may occur before the end of 1998.

As to the outcome of the current review of the SSAT, the recommendations made may well influence the future structure and operation of any division of the new tribunal responsible for hearing social security matters. Dame Margaret Guilfoyle's report is expected to be completed in May or June of 1997.

[A.T.]

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