## Foreword

This report is published as part of the OECD *Value for Money in Government* series. This project, launched in 2008 on the initiative of the Dutch government, aims to identify new developments in the organisation of central government that are leading to better value for money: better services at lower costs for the taxpayers.

The first report in the *Value for Money in Government* series was published in 2010 under the title: *Public Administration after "New Public Management"*. The title of this first report expressed an important feature of many new developments in OECD countries: a certain re-orientation of the reform trends of the 1980s and 1990s in the direction of a more consistent division of tasks between levels of government, more vertical integration (better use of executive and professional expertise in policy development), more horizontal integration (process sharing among executive agencies, merging of agencies, sharing of support services), stricter standards of operational management, and separating the financing of agencies from the steering and control of outputs.

The *Value for Money in Government* series includes a number of country assessments. Such assessments evaluate the organisation of one country's central government in the light of recent trends and developments in other countries taking part in the study.

Country assessments have been published for the Netherlands (May 2010) and Denmark (March 2011). The current report is the third country assessment in the series. Country assessments for Norway and Sweden will be published later in 2012.

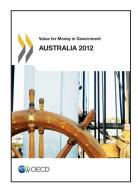
The OECD Value for Money study is supervised by an advisory committee consisting of countries that have pledged to provide data: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Data were collected from these countries through three questionnaires in 2009 and 2010.

The Australian assessment was prepared by an OECD team consisting of Dirk Kraan (lead, Budgeting and Public Expenditures Division, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate), Ian Hawkesworth (Budgeting and Public Expenditures Division, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate), Rex Deighton-Smith (consultant), and Joanne Kelly (consultant and professor at the Australia/New Zealand School of Government). Statistical assistance was provided by Emmanuel Job (OECD Secretariat).

The OECD team undertook a mission to Canberra from 30 November to 4 December 2009. The team met with numerous senior Australian officials from various departments and discussed institutional arrangements in the four major areas of government activity: policy development, policy execution, support services, and administrative supervision and regulation. The team expresses its gratitude for the time these interlocutors made available to answer questions and provide insights on the background of the Australian public administration. The views put forward by the Australian officials during these meetings inspired many ideas advanced in this report.

The team wishes to express gratitude to the many colleagues of the Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate who provided comments on earlier versions of the report, helped to collect data, and provided expertise on particular aspects of the Australian public administration.

Finally, the team wishes to thank Arthur Camilleri of the Australian Department of Finance and Deregulation who co-ordinated the contacts with the OECD team. Mr. Camilleri has over a period of more than two years taken care of efficient communication with a large group of Australian officials, spread over many departments, who provided information and expertise on the many aspects of public administration covered by this report. Without his dedication and support, the report could not have been produced.



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