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Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-20-07

Office of Inspections

February 2020

Inspection of Embassy Canberra and Constituent Posts, Australia

BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

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HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-20-07

What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management operations of Embassy Canberra. The inspection included Consulates General Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 22 recommendations to Embassy Canberra to improve mission operations, 1 of which OIG closed with the issuance of this report.

In its comments on the draft report, Embassy Canberra concurred with 20 recommendations and neither agreed nor disagreed with 1 recommendation. OIG considers all 21 recommendations resolved. The embassy's response to each recommendation, and OIG's reply, can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The embassy's formal written response is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

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What OIG Found

- The newly arrived Ambassador, Deputy Chief of Mission (formerly Chargé d'Affaires), and acting Deputy Chief of Mission established clearly defined goals and priorities for Mission Australia. They effectively employed a wide variety of mechanisms to communicate and coordinate their activities across the spectrum of external engagements with the Government of Australia and other stakeholders.
- Mission Australia generally implemented required processes and procedures in accordance with Department of State standards. However, a more than 2-year gap between ambassadors increased duties for both the Chargé d'Affaires and acting Deputy Chief of Mission, which detracted from Front Office oversight of internal operations.
- Residential safety certifications of more than 200 Department of Defense personnel under chief of mission authority did not comply with Department standards.
- Embassy Canberra effectively promoted information technology innovation and new programs and supported frequent regional high-profile visits. However, the embassy did not enforce standard procedures for the mission's information security program.
- **Spotlight on Success:** Embassy Canberra's chief of mission's letter mandating participation by the embassy in all high-level official visits increased the embassy's ability to support U.S. policy objectives.
- **Spotlight on Success:** The Financial Management Office used a process audit to improve its operations, productivity, and training.
- **Spotlight on Success:** Consulate General Perth's use of an information technology configuration tool to collectively update computer systems resulted in consistently high compliance scores with Department configuration standards.

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CONTEXT

Australia is the world's smallest continent but sixth largest country with a population of 23 million people. It is one of the top 20 economies in the world and has a gross domestic product of \$1.38 trillion. The Commonwealth of Australia is a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy, with the Queen of the United Kingdom as sovereign. The country's abundant and diverse natural resources attract high levels of foreign investment and include extensive reserves of coal, iron, copper, gold, natural gas, uranium, and renewable energy sources. For almost two decades, as export prices increased faster than import prices, the economy experienced continuous growth, low unemployment, contained inflation, very low public debt, and a strong and stable financial system.

The U.S.-Australia alliance advances U.S. national security goals. Australia has fought alongside the United States in every significant conflict since World War I, and its strategic location between the Indian and Pacific oceans, bilateral partnerships, and strong economic relationships with regional countries are crucial to executing the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy.¹ The United States partners with Australia to improve the capabilities of their regional allies, counter aspects of China's influence in the region, push North Korea to denuclearize, and counter the threats of terrorism, cyber-attacks, and transnational crime.

Australia and the United States have a close bilateral economic partnership. The United States is Australia's largest single foreign investor with \$650 billion in accumulated investment, including more than \$167 billion in foreign direct investment. In 2016, total U.S. goods and services traded with Australia totaled \$64 billion, and the United States ran a trade surplus of nearly \$17 billion. U.S. exports to Australia support more than 300,000 U.S. jobs in sectors including machinery, travel services, industrial supplies and materials, consumer goods, and financial services.

The embassy's three strategic objectives, as outlined in its July 2018 Integrated Country Strategy (ICS), are:

- Enhance security at home and abroad through strengthened U.S. ties with Australia.
- Advance economic prosperity by expanding both the scope of U.S. goods and services to Australia and two-way investment flows.
- Strengthen the U.S.-Australian alliance in order to improve security, economic prosperity, governance and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

The U.S. diplomatic mission in Australia consists of the embassy in Canberra and consulates general in Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney. At the time of the inspection, the mission employed 305 Department of State (Department) and other Federal agency U.S. employees, 25 eligible family members, and 243 locally employed (LE) staff. The other Federal agencies represented at the mission are the Departments of the Treasury, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. The U.S. Government

¹ National Security Strategy of the United States of America, December 2017.

does not provide any development assistance to Australia. Mission Australia provides management support to Embassy Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and Embassy Suva, Fiji, as well as medical and technical security support to other South Pacific posts.

OIG evaluated the mission's policy implementation, resource management, and management controls consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.² A related classified inspection report discusses the mission's security program and issues affecting policy implementation, the safety and security of mission personnel and facilities, and the information management programs.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

OIG assessed Mission Australia's leadership on the basis of on-site interviews that included comments on Front Office performance, staff questionnaires, and OIG's review of documents and observations of meetings and activities during the course of the on-site inspection.

Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

The non-career Ambassador arrived at Embassy Canberra in March 2019. He earlier served as White House Counsel to the President in a previous administration, as Chief Legislative Assistant to a United States senator, and as the chair of an international law firm in Washington, D.C. Prior to his arrival, Embassy Canberra was without an assigned ambassador for more than 2 years. The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in Canberra in September 2016 from a prior assignment as director of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs office responsible for relations with the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and East Timor. He served as Chargé d'Affaires (Chargé) from September 2016 until March 2019 and departed Embassy Canberra for an onward assignment in May 2019, during the on-site portion of the inspection. During the time the DCM served as Chargé, the Economic Counselor, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, was the acting Deputy Chief of Mission. He resumed the role of acting DCM in May 2019 following the DCM's departure.

OIG found the newly arrived Ambassador demonstrated the Department's leadership and management principles outlined in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214 to communicate, collaborate, and be self-aware in both his interactions with mission staff and in his outside activities. In OIG interviews, embassy staff consistently described him as approachable and a good listener. They said the Ambassador early on set forth his three priorities for the bilateral relationship: strengthening the U.S.-Australia alliance, advancing the economic partnership, and collaborating on development and regional security in the Pacific Islands region. In addition, members of the LE staff committee expressed appreciation that he met with them during his first week at the embassy.

² See Appendix A.

OIG found the DCM modeled integrity, took responsibility, and communicated to mission staff, consistent with 3 FAM 1214b. Mission staff praised his leadership during the time he served as Chargé and cited his high ethical standards, which he enforced in 2018 when he approved the termination or departure of six employees for cause. LE staff described positively his consistent communication with them during the 2019 partial U.S. Government shutdown, including in LE staff committee meetings, town hall meetings, and videoconferences with staff at the consulates general. Washington policymakers and other agency representatives in the mission highlighted his effective, high-level contacts with the host government as helpful in advancing U.S. interests in Australia. However, some personnel described the Chargé's focus as mainly external to the mission, stating that this left little time for internal management.

OIG found the acting DCM acted in accordance with the Department's 3 FAM 1214 leadership principles in some areas. OIG found he managed conflict appropriately and dealt decisively with performance issues involving Foreign Service officers at two consulates general. However, some mission staff told OIG the acting DCM did not fully assume the DCM role as the alter ego to the externally focused Chargé, a role outlined in 2 FAM 113.2. For example, as discussed later in the report, the acting DCM's attention to the mission's First-and Second-Tour (FAST) employee program, which is the responsibility of a DCM, was lacking.

During the course of the inspection, the newly arrived Ambassador, the Chargé, and the acting DCM told OIG that, although they had actively tried to recruit a diverse workforce, they remained concerned about this issue, particularly with respect to senior American leadership positions. Employees in the mission echoed these concerns. To meet the 3 FAM 1214b(6) principle of valuing diversity, OIG advised the newly arrived Ambassador that, as a first step, he should meet with the mission's new Federal Women's Program Coordinator to discuss potential initiatives to encourage diversity. The Ambassador agreed to do so.

OIG reviewed the embassy's gifts registry for 2018 and 2019 and found no irregularities. OIG also reviewed the gift registries at the consulates general and found that Consulate General Sydney's process for receiving, disposing, and reporting gifts was not consistent with Department guidance in 2 FAM 963 and 2 FAM 964 and cable 16 STATE 97388,³ which require the management officer to serve as the gifts officer. During the inspection, the embassy issued mission-wide guidance on proper management of gift registries to ensure the embassy and consulates general were all following the same process. As a result, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

OIG also reviewed the embassy's representational vouchers and found they complied with Department guidance.

³ Cable 16 STATE 97388, "NEW*Reporting Requirements for Official Gifts to the Department of State," September 1, 2016.

Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

Prior to the Ambassador's arrival, he was briefed in Washington and at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.⁴ He also reviewed the embassy's ICS and developed his top three priorities, which he closely aligned with ICS goals. During the inspection, the Ambassador was actively engaged in implementing the mission's plan for his first 100 days at post. The plan emphasized travel and meetings with state and territorial government officials in advance of Australia's national elections, which were held on May 18, 2019. By the beginning of June, the Ambassador had visited Australia's six states and two territories to meet local officials and other contacts and to consult with staff at the three consulates general. This emphasis on travel early in the Ambassador's tenure was consistent with his 2 FAM 113.1 responsibilities as chief of mission to keep fully informed of all U.S. Government activities and to develop contacts with local officials and potential leaders. OIG found that staff at the embassy and consulates general were familiar with ICS goals, which were printed on notecards and were widely available. Mission personnel told OIG they used the ICS goals and the Ambassador's priorities in considering grant proposals and representational events. Representatives of other agencies told OIG they similarly used the goals and the Ambassador's priorities to align their agency's efforts with those of the mission. These practices reflected Department guidance in 18 FAM 301.2-1a on strategic planning.

Policymakers in the Department and other U.S. Government agencies told OIG that, in the absence of an assigned ambassador, the Chargé actively and skillfully drove U.S. policy on political, economic, and trade issues and enjoyed the trust of a broad range of high-level Australian interlocutors. He received the Department's Distinguished Honor Award for promoting U.S. interests under Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy and increasing the relevance of the U.S.-Australian alliance. Washington and embassy officials positively cited the effect of his work on a U.S.-Japan-Australia trilateral initiative on infrastructure development, his leadership of a successful embassy-wide effort on refugee resettlement, and his role in opening Australian markets to U.S. exports.

However, mission officials told OIG the Chargé's decision in 2018 to informally assign to Consulate General Perth the political and economic reporting responsibilities for the Northern Territories, which are in Consulate General Melbourne's consular district, created confusion for both the consulates general and their local interlocutors. Department guidance in 2 FAM 112 delegates to a chief of mission the authority to determine a mission's structure. In addition, guidance in 2 FAM 113.1b directs a chief of mission to integrate the activities of all posts into a planned and effective strategic plan. The Ambassador told OIG he was reviewing the division of responsibilities and planned to issue updated guidance. In August 2019, the Ambassador informed OIG that political and economic reporting responsibilities for the Northern Territories had been returned to Consulate General Melbourne. As a result, OIG did not make a recommendation.

⁴ The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command is one of six geographic combatant commands defined by the Department of Defense's Unified Command Plan. The commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command reports to the President of the United States through the Secretary of Defense.

Spotlight on Success: Improving Coordination With High-level Visitors

A Mission Australia initiative improved coordination between mission staff and high-level visitors. Following the Ambassador's arrival in March 2019, the embassy began sending a letter from the Ambassador to all high-level U.S. Government visitors encouraging cooperation between the mission and the visitors' staff in planning and carrying out visits. The Front Office implemented this change following incidents in which mission staff were not included in meetings with high-level visitors and their Australian counterparts. The letter highlights the importance of mission involvement in the planning, execution, and follow-up of these visits and advises visitors to contact the Ambassador directly if they have any concerns about the mission's role. During the inspection, OIG learned of three instances where the letter prompted cooperation on an upcoming visit after initial expressions of reluctance to do so. The letter highlights the Ambassador's authority to carry out the chief of mission responsibilities delineated in 2 FAM 113.1c(2, 3, 6, and 15). It also facilitates planning for visits and positions mission staff for success in following up with local contacts once a visit is over.

Adherence to Internal Controls

OIG found Mission Australia completed the Chief of Mission Annual Management Control Statement of Assurance in accordance with 2 FAM 022.7(5) and 2 FAM 024d. The Statement of Assurance, submitted by the Chargé on October 1, 2018, identified two potential material weaknesses or significant deficiencies⁵ related to the office spaces for cashiering services and one related to the lack of safety, health, and environmental inspections of residences for Department of Defense (DoD) employees under chief of mission authority. During the inspection, OIG found internal control concerns in facilities management, general services, financial management, and information management. These are detailed in the Resource Management and Information Management sections of this report and in the related classified report.

Mission Did Not Exercise NSDD-38 Process in Accordance with Department Standards

Mission Australia did not follow the National Security Decision Directive 38 (NSDD-38) process⁶ to determine mission staffing levels, as required by Department standards. Through interviews and document reviews, OIG found the embassy did not require all agencies at the mission to use the NSDD-38 process when changing staffing levels. In addition, even when the NSDD-38

⁵ According to 2 FAM 021.3, a material weakness is a significant deficiency that the agency head determines to be significant enough to report outside of the agency. In the context of financial reporting, a material weakness is a significant deficiency, or a combination of significant deficiencies, that result in more than a remote likelihood that a material misstatement of the financial statements, or other significant financial reports, will not be prevented or detected. A significant deficiency is defined as a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, that in management's judgment should be communicated because they represent significant weaknesses in the design or operation of internal controls that could adversely affect the organization's ability to meet its internal control objectives. A significant deficiency does not yet rise to the level of seriousness of a material weakness; however, if effective corrections are not made, the matter has the potential over time to develop into a material weakness.

⁶ National Security Decision Directive 38, dated June 2, 1982, gives a chief of mission control of the size, composition, and mandate of overseas full-time mission staffing for all U.S. Government agencies.

process was followed, the mission lacked documentation for some changes. Furthermore, OIG interviews in Washington and the mission found a wide divergence of views as to whether certain U.S. Government personnel assigned throughout Australia were under chief of mission authority.⁷ For example, the embassy in 2017 recognized that it had incorrectly delegated to DoD the responsibility for residential safety inspections of more than 200 military employees, as detailed in the Resource Management section of this report. OIG found the embassy did not consult the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, the Office of the Legal Adviser, or the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions (formerly the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation) regarding whether certain personnel assigned throughout Australia were under chief of mission authority as outlined in 2 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-2 H-112.2. In accordance with Department guidance in 1 FAM 013.5-3, 2 FAH-2 H-113a(5), and 2 FAH-2 H-113.1a that addresses use of the NSDD-38 process, the Ambassador is responsible for reviewing staffing for all positions under chief of mission authority and ensuring staffing is consistent with mission goals and objectives. Because it did not engage in such a review, the mission did not have complete information on all staffing and lacked clear lines of authority for the Ambassador to exercise effective oversight and coordination.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, the Office of the Legal Adviser, and the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions, should determine which U.S. Government personnel in Australia are under chief of mission authority, in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with EAP, L, and M/SS)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Canberra should implement procedures to review staffing levels in accordance with Department standards for the National Security Decision Directive 38 process. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Security and Emergency Planning

OIG interviews and reviews of documentation found the Ambassador, the Chargé, and the acting DCM supported the mission's security programs. The Ambassador participated in the Regional Security Officer's weekly meeting with the acting DCM. Consistent with guidance in 12 FAH-2 H-116.4, the embassy's Emergency Action Committee in October 2018 reviewed and validated the memorandum of agreement between the Chief of Mission and the geographic combatant commander on security responsibilities for DoD personnel. The then-Chargé and acting DCM both participated in security drills. The embassy held a crisis management exercise in November 2018 and later reported its "lessons learned" in a cable. At the time of the inspection, the embassy was working to implement all emergency drills recommended following the crisis management exercise. OIG also identified concerns related to physical security, emergency preparation, residential security, and information management that are discussed in the related classified inspection report.

⁷ According to the Department's Office of Management Strategy and Solutions (formerly the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation), full-time permanent employees detailed to an international organization or working under a geographic combatant commander do not fall under chief of mission authority.

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

The Chargé and the acting DCM oversaw the mission's FAST employee program for 10 officers and specialists, as required in 3 FAM 2242.4 and 3 FAM 2253.1. However, six of the nine FAST employees who responded to OIG's survey rated the program as "poor" or "fair." FAST employees at the embassy and Consulate General Sydney told OIG there were few activities or opportunities in which they could gain additional experience. OIG's review of the acting DCM's calendar found only three FAST activities for the previous 12 months. Following a mission-wide FAST officers conference in late 2018, the employees recommended improvements to the program through a January 2019 memorandum to the acting DCM. During the inspection, he agreed to implement those recommendations, including assigning FAST officers as note-takers in Country Team meetings.

Nevertheless, OIG found the FAST program oversight by the Chargé and acting DCM fell short of the best practices contained in Department cables⁸ and in 3 FAM 1214b(8). The Chargé's and the acting DCM's dual responsibilities for more than 2 years reduced their attention to the FAST program. The lack of an effective FAST program decreases professional development opportunities, which hinders the ability of FAST employees to serve at higher levels of responsibility.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Canberra should conduct its mission-wide First- and Second-Tour employee program in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Equal Employment Opportunity

OIG found that the embassy's EEO program did not meet Department standards in 3 FAM 1514.2. Although the Ambassador expressed support for the Department's EEO policies, the embassy's sole EEO counselor departed in May 2019, and none of the consulates general had an EEO counselor at the time of the inspection. Prior to his departure in May 2019, the embassy's EEO counselor offered three voluntary training sessions on EEO and related processes. The mission also offered a voluntary videoconference presentation on unconscious bias. Guidance in 3 FAM 1514.2 requires a chief of mission to nominate EEO counselors to ensure one counselor at posts with fewer than 50 employees and strongly encourages additional nominations at larger posts. However, on February 1, 2019, the Department suspended all nominations for new EEO counselors until June 30, 2019.⁹ The Chargé did not nominate EEO counselors for the consulates general prior to the suspension, and the Ambassador could not make any nominations upon his arrival. Now that the Department has lifted its suspension, the embassy can and should nominate EEO counselors for the mission. The

⁸ Cables 14 STATE 19636, "Mentoring the Next Generation – Take Charge," February 22, 2014, and 15 STATE 23542, "Mentoring for a Stronger Department of State," March 5, 2015.

⁹ In a February 1, 2019, Department notice, the Office of Civil Rights announced a hold on EEO counselor nominations in order to improve standards and procedures for nominating new counselors.

absence of EEO counselors at Mission Australia hinders employees' access to EEO procedures and information.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Office of Civil Rights, should nominate Equal Employment Opportunity counselors in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with S/OCR)

Executive Direction at Constituent Posts

Embassy Canberra employed various methods to coordinate with constituent post leadership in Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney, including weekly Front Office conference calls with the Consuls General, a weekly Country Team videoconference, and in-country travel. All three Consuls General traveled extensively within their consular districts. OIG's review of their schedules showed meetings and activities with a wide variety of Australian Government and non-government entities, consistent with Department guidance in 2 FAM 113.9(2-3). OIG observations and interviews with security officers at the embassy and constituent posts and other mission staff confirmed all three Consuls General supported the security programs at their posts.

Consulate General Melbourne

Consulate General staff consistently told OIG the Consul General, who arrived in August 2018, practiced the leadership and management principles embodied in 3 FAM 1214 and the Department's guidance for principal officers in 2 FAM 113.9(1). OIG interviews and observations found the Consul General held effective meetings and made a daily habit of walking through all sections of the facility to observe operations. Staff members told OIG the Consul General provided useful feedback on their performance. American and LE staff described him as approachable and open to advice and said he upheld high ethical standards in creating a gift registry and consulting with the embassy on gifts to the consulate and the Ambassador.

Public Diplomacy staff credited the Consul General with revitalizing their social media strategy by reaching out to Australian youth, which led to large increases in their social media engagement statistics. Under his guidance, the consulate general focused on ICS goals and on reporting on issues of interest to the Department. LE staff told OIG they appreciated that the Consul General instituted quarterly meetings with the LE staff committee. American staff, including FAST employees, highlighted his mentorship and credited him with creating an effective FAST program. The Consul General actively addressed EEO issues as they arose and proactively brought the embassy's EEO counselor to conduct mandatory training in April 2019. He also encouraged all staff to attend the embassy's videoconference on unconscious bias.

Consulate General Perth

The Consul General in Perth communicated and coordinated with her staff through weekly scheduled meetings for the political, economic, and public diplomacy officers and LE staff, and monthly meetings with all consulate general staff. OIG observed that in addition to the Consul

General's open-door policy, she made a point to visit individual staff members in their offices. Employees told OIG the Consul General supported security programs and participated in all drills as well as the crisis management exercise. In addition, the Consul General conducted an active mid-tour officer mentoring program and actively engaged with U.S. business and American citizens during her official travel.

Although the consulate general staff was aware of the mission's ICS goals, OIG found the Consul General did not have any overarching plan to incorporate the representational, engagement, travel, and reporting activities with those goals. This reduced the Consul General's ability to focus activities on meeting mission ICS goals. OIG advised, and the Consul General concurred, that developing an annual plan that focused activities on ICS goals would improve her ability to establish expectations, give direction to staff, and monitor results in line with 3 FAM 1214b and 18 FAM 301.2-4(C).

Consulate General Sydney

Most Department personnel told OIG that the Consul General was accessible, familiar with their activities, and offered useful feedback on their performance, consistent with 3 FAM 1214b leadership and management principles. Some representatives of other U.S. Government agencies told OIG they met regularly with the Consul General, while others said their meetings often were rescheduled and that the Consul General rarely visited their offices. The Consul General initiated a series of small gatherings at the residence for all local employees, but the LE staff committee said they had not met with her since her arrival in September 2018. OIG recommended, and the Consul General agreed, that she meet regularly with the LE staff committee.

OIG found the Consul General effectively advanced the mission's ICS goals by working with the U.S. Commercial Service to assist major U.S. exporters and investors in the consular district, which generates over 50% of Australia's gross domestic product. OIG noted that the consulate general's FAST program provided limited opportunities for professional development outside of the Consular Section. OIG gave the Consul General the Department's guidance on successful FAST programs, which she acted upon during the inspection.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OIG assessed Mission Australia's policy and program implementation through a review of the embassy and consulates general advocacy and analysis work performed by the Political and Economic Sections, the efforts of Public Diplomacy Sections, and the provision of American citizen and visa services by Consular Sections. OIG found the embassy and consulates general generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation, with the exceptions noted below.

Political and Economic Sections

OIG reviewed the mission's Political and Economic Sections' leadership and management, policy engagement and coordination, reporting, Leahy vetting,¹⁰ commercial promotion, and end-use monitoring functions. Overall, OIG found that the mission's political and economic functions complied with Department standards and policies, with two exceptions.

Reporting and Engagement Supported Integrated Country Strategy, Department Priorities

OIG found the mission's Political and Economic Sections advanced ICS and Department goals through reporting and diplomatic engagement. Department offices and interagency consumers praised mission reporting on domestic politics, defense issues, and the Indo-Pacific strategy as well as on health, telecommunications, energy, and critical minerals sectors. Department officials also credited the sections' engagement in the success of bilateral and trilateral dialogues in important areas of collaboration, including civil space and counterterrorism. OIG reviewed 279 mission cables sent between October 2018 and April 2019 and found reporting to be relevant to ICS goals, generally timely, and appropriately sourced. OIG also noted coverage of China's engagement in Australia in reporting across the mission, consistent with Department priorities.

Interagency Coordination Was Strong, But Formal Mission Coordination Was Uneven

Interagency representatives reported effective coordination with the embassy and consulates general. In particular, interagency representatives praised the effect of a cybersecurity working group, which they stated led to information sharing and enabled coordinated action and follow-up. In addition, Washington stakeholders and other agencies in the mission positively described the mission's Political and Economic Sections for their engagement and collaboration. OIG also observed effective informal coordination between the embassy and consulates general, and their staffs reported productive working-level interactions. The political and economic officers and LE staff in the three consulates general started regular coordination calls of their own, which they considered useful. The embassy's Economic Section engaged with all the consulates general to advocate, coordinate, and report on country-wide activities in support of technology entrepreneurship, which Department representatives applauded.

OIG found dissatisfaction with some formal coordination mechanisms between the embassy and consulates general. For example, Political and Economic Section staff throughout the mission expressed disappointment that a mission-wide reporting conference dropped a critical session on coordination between the embassy and the consulates general. They also told OIG that the mission-wide reporting plan did not effectively integrate input from different sources, but instead compiled disparate comments. Furthermore, staff told OIG that biweekly Political and Economic Section conference calls were often cancelled or were held at approximately the same time as a monthly videoconference among mission economic officers. In line with 3 FAM

¹⁰ The Leahy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 prohibits the Department from furnishing assistance to foreign security forces if the Department receives credible information that such forces have committed gross violations of human rights. See 22 U.S.C. 2378d.

1214b(4) and (7) principles of communication and collaboration, OIG advised the section leaders to consider ways to strengthen formal coordination. Section leaders acknowledged the concerns and discussed steps they would take to address them.

Mission's Records Retirement Practices Did Not Comply With Department Standards

The mission's records retirement practices did not comply with Department records management standards. For example, the embassy last retired records in 2005, and two of the three consulates general had not retired records in more than 20 years. Department standards in 5 FAM 414.8(1)-(2) require that all Department employees preserve documentary materials meeting the definition of a record under the Federal Records Act and create, use, maintain, preserve, and dispose of the Department's information and records according to Department requirements. In addition, 5 FAM 414.5a requires the principal officer at each post to implement and administer records policies, standards, systems, and procedures issued by the Department's Records Officer, and 5 FAM 433a-b requires posts to maintain an active, continuing retirement program and retire records in accordance with records disposition schedules. During the inspection, Embassy Canberra's Political Section completed archiving records for 2008 through 2018, and the Economic Section began to prepare for archiving records. However, the small Political-Economic Sections in the consulates general told OIG they were unaware of record retirement requirements. The lack of an effective records retirement program increases the risk of loss of important data and historical records that could affect the Department's and the mission's ability to conduct policy analysis, decision-making, and archival research.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Canberra should conduct records retirement in accordance with Department records management standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed Mission Australia's public diplomacy operations related to strategic planning and reporting, section leadership and resource management, Federal assistance, media engagement, and cultural programs. OIG found public diplomacy activities focused on ICS goals with an emphasis on engaging an influential younger audience in response to polling that showed a generational shift away from the United States in favor of China.

At the time of the inspection, the mission suffered from extensive staffing shortages. The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs eliminated Consulate General Melbourne's Public Affairs Officer position in August 2018.¹¹ Consulate General Perth assigned responsibility for the public diplomacy programs to its Political-Economic Officer. Furthermore, 6 of the mission's 23 public diplomacy LE staff positions were vacant at the time of the inspection. Mission Australia expected these positions to remain vacant until early 2020 due to the Department's ongoing

¹¹ The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs moved the sole Melbourne Public Affairs Officer position to Embassy Kolonia, Federated States of Micronesia, to support public diplomacy operations in Micronesia and Palau.

Locally Employed Staff Modernization Initiative.¹² American and LE staff told OIG the additional workload created by the public diplomacy vacancies mission-wide was unsustainable, undermined operational effectiveness, and risked additional LE staff turnover. Despite these staffing shortages, the embassy-based Public Affairs Counselor effectively managed mission-wide public diplomacy resources and promoted collaboration among embassy and consulate general American and LE staff. OIG found the mission's public diplomacy activities met Department standards and guidance, with the exception below.

Public Diplomacy Grants Files Were Missing Required Documentation

OIG found that the Public Diplomacy Section's grants generally supported ICS goals, but grant files were missing required documentation. The embassy awarded 143 grants in FY 2017, FY 2018, and the first two quarters of FY 2019 (total value \$1.96 million). OIG reviewed 20 grants awarded during that period, including all grants in excess of \$20,000 (total value \$1.3 million), and found the files lacked some documentation required by Federal and Department guidance.¹³ The missing documents included monitoring reports, grants officer final evaluations during closeout, and evidence that grants had been awarded through a fair and open process with a merit panel review.¹⁴ Files for grants issued prior to September 2018 lacked risk assessments and formal monitoring plans. Despite this, the embassy provided sufficient information for OIG to determine that grant applications had been properly evaluated and that the funded work was underway or completed.

OIG found the grant file issues occurred in part because the embassy had only recently started using the State Assistance Management System Overseas grants management software, which the Department deployed in Canberra in December 2018. Before doing so, the embassy used an outdated grants management checklist. Furthermore, none of the consulates general LE staff who oversaw grants in their districts had completed training to serve as grants officer representatives. Due to competing priorities, these LE staff members were not forwarding

¹² In July 2014, the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs' Office of Policy, Planning and Resources, in conjunction with the Bureau of Human Resources' Office of Overseas Employment, began a comprehensive review of overseas public diplomacy functions and structures as well as LE staff position descriptions to reflect changes in the public diplomacy environment. The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs authorized 14 new framework position descriptions under the Locally Employed Staff Modernization Initiative in January 2018, and initial rollout began in September 2018. As of March 7, 2019, the position descriptions for 120 employees at 15 posts had been reclassified. Full global implementation is anticipated to be completed by the end of FY 2021, and, as noted in the text, the Department expects to address the positions in Mission Australia by early 2020.

¹³ Based on the date of award, different federal assistance award guidance applies to the assistance awards reviewed. These include the Federal Assistance Policy Directives, valid from March 13, 2015, through May 19, 2017; the Federal Assistance Directive, Version 1.2, valid from May 20 through September 30, 2017; the Federal Assistance Directive, Version 2.3, valid from October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018; and Federal Assistance Directive, Version 3.0, which took effect on October 1, 2018.

¹⁴ Office of the Procurement Executive, Federal Assistance Directive, May 2017. See Chapter 2, Section I, "Initiate the Official Federal Assistance File DS-4012," page 47; Chapter 2, Section F, "Conduct an Open Competition to Select a Recipient," and Section F.1., "Requirements for Open Competition," both on page 33; Chapter 2, Section K, "Risk Assessment Procedure," page 57; Chapter 2, Section O, "Develop a Monitoring Plan," page 75; Chapter 3, Section K, "Monitoring," page 110; and, Chapter 4, Section C.2., "Performance Progress Report," page 122.

correspondence with grantees or other monitoring evidence to the embassy's grants officer representative, who physically managed the files. Without adequate employee training and updated standard operating procedures, including a current checklist to ensure grant files are properly maintained, the embassy may not have the documentation necessary to effectively oversee and manage its grants.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Canberra should update its standard operating procedures and checklist and provide staff training in order to maintain grant files as required by Department and Federal assistance guidance. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Consular Affairs

OIG reviewed Mission Australia's implementation and oversight of consular operations at Consulates General Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney. The mission closed Embassy Canberra's Consular Section in 2018. OIG reviewed consular leadership, American citizen services, crisis preparedness, management controls, visa services and processing, and anti-fraud programs. OIG also assessed coordination among the three Consular Sections and with other sections and agencies within the mission.

The mission provides consular services for U.S. citizens throughout Australia—a challenge consular personnel addressed by making periodic outreach trips to remote cities to provide consular services to U.S. citizens, build relationships with regional and local authorities, and pay mandated visits to imprisoned U.S. citizens. The Country-wide Consular Coordinator based at Consulate General Sydney provided effective oversight and coordination of the three sections through quarterly visits and weekly teleconferences. She leveraged the talents of LE staff members by sending them to assist Consulate General Melbourne during prolonged staffing gaps and encouraged staff at the three posts to share successful strategies. OIG found that the mission's consular programs generally complied with Department guidance, with the exceptions described below.

OIG identified three deficiencies that the Consular Sections corrected during the inspection:

- The Country-wide Consular Coordinator, in consultation with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, developed and began implementing a plan to reduce the number of approved physicians who provide exams for immigrant visa applicants and to improve oversight, in accordance with 9 FAM 302.2-3(E)(2)c.
- The Country-wide Consular Coordinator developed, disseminated, and began implementing a new mission-wide fraud prevention strategy, as required in 7 FAH-1 H-941a.
- All three Consular Sections started to conduct reviews of visa decisions in a timely manner as required in 9 FAM 403.12-1d.

Non-Standard Cash Reconciliation Procedures Created Vulnerabilities

Accountable consular officers at the three Consular Sections were not always able to conduct end-of-day cash reconciliations, as required by Department guidance. This was often caused by factors outside consular managers' control, such as when the consulates general principal cashiers closed before the end of daily consular services or when the alternate cashiers were unavailable. In accordance with 7 FAH-1 H-744.1, Consular Section managers and the Financial Management Officer are responsible for developing appropriate procedures when consular services routinely continue past the time that the principal cashier closes operations. OIG advised, and consular managers agreed, to develop proper procedures to safeguard funds in these instances and to request the Bureau of Consular Affairs' approval for these non-standard measures. As a result, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

OIG also provided the following suggestions to improve consular operations:

- **Consular Crisis Risk Assessments Lacking:** The three Consular Sections did not develop Consular Crisis Risk Assessments, as recommended by the Bureau of Consular Affairs.¹⁵ The consular managers responded favorably to OIG's suggestion that they develop such assessments to determine which hazards present the most critical threats to the safety and security of U.S. citizens in their districts and to develop plans to mitigate those risks.
- **Incomplete Training Limited Consulate General Melbourne's Effectiveness:** Staff told OIG that not all Consulate General Melbourne's consular officers and American citizens services LE staff received training in how to manage Special Citizens Services casework, such as repatriations, assistance to ill and injured Americans, and arrests. Consular managers agreed with OIG's suggestion that they expand training so more staff members would be prepared to assist U.S. citizens in these types of emergencies.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Mission Australia's internal control systems in financial management, facilities management, general services, and human resources operations at Embassy Canberra and the consulates general in Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney. As discussed in the Executive Direction section of this report, Embassy Canberra included three facilities management deficiencies in its 2018 Statement of Assurance that it deemed significant: inadequate cashiering facilities at Consulates General Melbourne and Perth and the residential safety program for DoD staff.¹⁶ The embassy corrected the deficiencies related to cashiering facilities and was developing a solution to address the safety program for DoD staff. The latter issue is discussed below. OIG found that the mission's Management Sections generally implemented required processes and

¹⁵ See 7 FAM 020 Appendix B, "ACS Responsibilities," (3)(b), and cable 14 STATE 60380, "Measuring Consular Crisis Preparedness – Announcing the First CA Metric," May 19, 2014.

¹⁶ The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs determined that none of these deficiencies rose to the Department level and, accordingly, did not include them in the bureau's Statement of Assurance.

procedures in accordance with applicable laws and Department guidance, except as described below.

Real Property

Mission Australia's U.S. Government-owned buildings include the embassy compound, chief of mission residence, deputy chief of mission residence, Marine Security Guard residence, and 47 residences in Canberra as well as the principal officer residences in Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney.¹⁷ In FY 2019, Embassy Canberra developed a housing renovation plan subject to Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) approval and funding to improve the condition and functionality of 20 of the 47 Canberra residences over a 5-year period. The embassy also discussed with OBO the potential disposal of two other Canberra residences, as discussed below.

Embassy Did Not Follow Department Guidelines for Disposal of Two Residential Properties

Embassy Canberra did not follow Department guidelines for the disposal of two residential properties in Canberra's Kalgoorlie Crescent neighborhood.¹⁸ The embassy's Management Section staff told OIG they wanted to dispose of the residences because their small size and internal layout made them difficult to assign to most officers, particularly those with families. One of the residences had been vacant since June 1, 2018, when the occupant departed post. At the time of the inspection, the embassy was using it as transient housing to accommodate interns and temporary duty staff.¹⁹ The second residence was occupied at the time of the inspection, but the embassy planned to dispose of it when the employee departs post in March 2020.

Despite identifying the need to dispose of the two properties in mid-2018, the embassy did not take appropriate steps to do so. According to 15 FAM 512.1a, posts must review U.S. Government-owned and capital lease properties annually to identify those excess to requirements, not fully utilized, or uneconomical to retain based on 18 factors outlined in 15 FAM Exhibit 512.1.²⁰ Posts must report such properties to OBO and the regional bureau and make recommendations for disposal. Finally, posts must obtain approval from OBO before taking any action relating to the disposal. While the embassy's Management Section staff discussed the disposal process with OBO's real property leasing staff during a site visit in April 2019, OIG found the embassy took no other action.

¹⁷ While the U.S. Government owns the buildings, the Government of Australia retains ownership of the land.

¹⁸ These are property reference numbers R48 and R49 listed in OBO's Real Property Abroad Report.

¹⁹ OIG found the embassy did not obtain OBO's approval to use the residence as transient housing for more than 90 days, as required in 15 FAM 249.1a. The guidance also states that, with prior authorization from OBO and the embassy's International Cooperative Administrative Support Services Council, an embassy may use residential properties that have been vacant over 90 days as transient housing.

²⁰ Some of the 18 factors listed in the 15 FAM Exhibit 512.1 include whether the property is uneconomical to retain, whether maintenance and operating costs are excessive, and whether there are security, political, or public relations considerations related to the disposal process and the sale of these properties.

OIG estimated these Government-owned residences each had a market value of between \$484,690 and \$550,942 and could net the Department up to a total of \$1.1 million if sold. However, because the embassy would need to lease two replacement residences, the sales proceeds would be offset by lease costs of \$68,345 annually, or \$205,035 over a 3-year tour for both residences. By disposing of the two small, poorly configured residences, the embassy could put up to \$896,849 to better use.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should dispose of property numbers R48 and R49 at Kalgoorlie Crescent in accordance with Department guidelines and put up to \$896,849 to better use. (Action: Embassy Canberra in coordination with OBO and EAP)

Financial Management

Only One of Ten Information Management Positions Programmed to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

OIG found that International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS)²¹ funded only 1 of the mission's 10 Information Management U.S. direct-hire positions, although the section provided support to other agencies. The Department paid for the remaining nine positions through its Diplomatic and Consular Program funding, even though the mission estimated that some of these employees allocated more than 50 percent of their time to ICASS services. According to 6 FAH-5 H-013.2, agencies must pay their share of post administrative costs based on usage. Pursuant to 6 FAH-5 H-341.9,²² ICASS costs should include salaries and benefits of all U.S. direct-hire and LE staff who deliver services to other agencies, overhead associated with those staff members, and equipment required to provide services. According to 6 FAH-5 H-341.4-3, Note 2, at posts with multiple U.S. direct-hire IM officers and specialists, the Department pays for the first position, while the second one is always paid through ICASS. Where there are more than two such employees, the post should determine an appropriate mix of program and ICASS-funded positions. Thus, at Mission Australia, failure to determine whether the eight additional Information Management positions should be reprogrammed to ICASS means the Department would continue to subsidize most of the costs for Information Management services to other agencies. OIG estimated the Department could recover \$243,993 over 3 years per position in funds put to better use by converting additional positions to ICASS.²³

²¹ ICASS, established in 1997, is the principal means by which U.S. Government agencies share the cost of common administrative support services at more than 250 diplomatic and consular posts overseas. Through the ICASS working capital fund, service providers recover the cost of delivering administrative support services to other agencies at overseas missions, in accordance with 6 FAM 911 and 6 FAH-5 H-013.2.

²² See 6 FAH-5 H-341.9-1(B), 6 FAH-5 H-341.9-2(B), and 6 FAH-5 H-341.9-3(B).

²³ Relying on Department-provided figures, OIG estimated the Department could annually recover \$81,331 per position, using the worldwide average cost of an ICASS U.S. direct-hire position of \$268,419 and the worldwide average percentage of time U.S. direct-hire Information Management staff support other agencies of 30.3 percent ($\$268,419 \times .303 = \$81,331$). Because Canberra is a 3-year tour, the total funds put to better use is calculated as 3 x \$81,331 for a total of \$243,993 per position reprogrammed to ICASS.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, should reprogram additional Diplomatic and Consular Program-funded Information Management positions to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services-funded positions, in accordance with Department standards, and put funds of \$243,993 over 3 years per position to better use. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with EAP and CGFS)

De-Obligation of Prior Year Obligation Resulted in Funds of \$408,688 Put to Better Use

In reviewing the mission's prior year unliquidated obligation balances from FY 2014 to FY 2018, OIG found one item that did not comply with guidance in 4 FAM 225a, which requires the embassy to review these obligations monthly and at the end of the fiscal year and de-obligate those that are unneeded. In particular, OIG identified an unliquidated obligation for \$408,688 in the FY 2018 OBO ICASS allotment for leased office space at Consulate General Sydney. The financial management staff budgeted lease costs for a full year, but the lease expired in October 2018, leaving 3 months of unused funding. After the lease expired, the embassy occupied the space on a month-to-month basis, which OBO funded in its FY 2019 ICASS allotment for lease cost. As this incident illustrates, failure to review and de-obligate unliquidated obligations in a timely manner results in an accumulation of funds that could be put to better use.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Canberra should de-obligate unliquidated obligations totaling \$408,688 and put the funds to better use. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

During the inspection, the financial management staff de-obligated the invalid prior year obligation listed above. As a result, this recommendation was closed, and the funds involved (\$408,688) were put to better use.

Alternate Cashiers Did Not Regularly Assume Principal Cashiers' Duties

Mission Australia's alternate cashiers served as the principal cashier only during the main cashiers' absence and not more regularly, as required by Department guidelines.²⁴ The Department's Cashier Users Guide, Chapter 3.6, states the American supervisor should establish a schedule that allows the alternate cashier to work as the acting principal cashier two to three times per month to ensure that the alternate cashier maintains the necessary skills. Financial management staff mission-wide told OIG they had not fully implemented this requirement because of competing priorities and limited LE staffing at their posts. An alternate cashier who is unfamiliar with cashiering procedures risks making errors in cashiering operations when the principal cashier is absent.

²⁴ The finding includes two alternate cashiers designated at Embassy Canberra and one alternate cashier each at Consulates General Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Canberra should establish a schedule that allows the alternate cashier at each post to work as the principal cashier, in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Spotlight on Success: Process Audit Improved Financial Management Procedures

The Financial Management Office used a process audit to improve its operations and training. In 2018, the office audited its financial activities, resources, and behaviors to determine whether those processes were efficient. As a result, the office created work instructions that outlined detailed, comprehensive step-by-step procedures for completing specific tasks in all areas of financial management, including procedures for year-end closure and for sending invoices to the designated billing official. The process audit and work instructions led to improvements in the office's productivity, quality, speed, and risk mitigation. Additionally, they served as a reference document and training guide for new and inexperienced financial management staff.

Facilities Management

Mission Housing Program Did Not Meet Department Safety Standards

Mission Australia's housing program did not fully meet Department safety, health, and environmental management program standards. Guidance in 15 FAM 252.5c states that all Post Occupational Safety and Health Officer (POSHO) safety certifications must be completed and documented in the POSHO Certification Application system.²⁵ However, OIG found that Embassy Canberra's POSHO had not fully completed or entered certifications for 76 residential properties listed in the real property database into this system. Similarly, the POSHOs at Consulates General Perth and Sydney did not complete and enter a certification for one residential unit each into the system.

Mission staff told OIG that the embassy did fully complete or enter some POSHO safety certifications because of staffing shortages. For example, the LE staff safety coordinator position remained vacant for one year before being filled, and the U.S direct-hire deputy facilities management position remained vacant because of worldwide facility manager shortages. Failure to conduct safety certifications could lead to the assignment of mission U.S. direct-hire employees and their families to unsafe residences.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Canberra should complete and document safety certifications, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

²⁵ The POSHO Certification Application generates and documents the form used by POSHOs to certify that a residence meets the requirements of 15 FAM 252.5. The form lists the safety requirements that must be certified prior to occupancy, and the application allows relevant documentation to be electronically attached to the form.

Safety Certifications of More Than 200 Department of Defense Residences Did Not Comply With Standards

In 2017, Embassy Canberra discovered it had not completed POSHO certifications for more than 200 residences occupied by DoD Annex B personnel²⁶ located throughout Australia, as required by Department standards. The DoD employees had conducted their own safety inspections, but this was counter to guidance in 15 FAM 263e, which requires the POSHO to inspect these residences. The Facility Manager notified embassy and DoD staff that he, as the POSHO, could not delegate his responsibility to perform safety inspections to DoD employees as had been done previously. Embassy Canberra subsequently identified this issue as a significant deficiency in its 2018 Chief of Mission Management Control Statement of Assurance. Failure to have qualified and trained staff conduct residential safety inspections could lead DoD staff to lease unsafe residences.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should bring the residential safety program for Department of Defense personnel under chief of mission authority into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with OBO and EAP)

Fire Protection Program Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards

Mission Australia did not comply with the following elements of the Department's fire protection program:

- Management staff throughout the mission did not inspect all fire extinguishers on a monthly basis, as required by 15 FAM 842a. OIG found that Embassy Canberra staff last inspected 6 fire extinguishers in the warehouse and 19 in the chief of mission residence in 2018. In Consulates General Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney, staff inspected four fire extinguishers located in each of these offices only once or twice in 2018.
- Occupants mission-wide did not conduct monthly residential fire extinguisher inspections as mandated by 15 FAM 842b. OIG's inspection of 34 residences found no record of monthly inspections.
- Occupants mission-wide did not conduct monthly residential smoke alarm inspections as required by 15 FAM 841b. OIG's inspection of 34 mission residences found no records that the smoke detectors had been inspected.

²⁶ In December 1997, the Secretaries of Defense and State signed an agreement to address the security of Department of Defense personnel located overseas, in which the Secretary of State agreed, per 22 U.S.C. 4805(a), to delegate operational control of security functions for certain DoD personnel to the Secretary of Defense. This agreement is implemented through country-level memoranda of agreement (MOA) between the chief of mission (COM) and relevant geographic combatant commander (GCC). Annex A of the resulting country-level MOA lists DoD personnel under COM authority who remain under COM security responsibility. In contrast, Annex B lists DoD personnel who the COM and GCC agreed would be the security responsibility of the GCC. However, the 1997 agreement does not allow for the delegation of authority with regard to residential safety standards; therefore, the Department remained responsible for their residential safety.

- One Consulate General Perth residence lacked a proper secondary egress because a bedroom window grille did not have a releasable mechanism to allow escape, contrary to OBO Fire Protection Guide, Section B5, requirements.

Management staff told OIG the fire safety deficiencies occurred because of understaffing and inadequate oversight. The lack of fire extinguisher and smoke detector inspections and secondary egress increases the risk of injury and loss of life.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Canberra should bring the mission's fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

General Services

Nonexpendable Property Transfers to Residences Were Not Documented

According to Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS)²⁷ property system metrics, the embassy and consulates general did not document between 5.8 and 47.2 percent of nonexpendable property transfers to residences between October 1, 2018, and March 31, 2019.²⁸ Guidance in 14 FAM 416.3a requires property transfers to be documented and signed for by the occupant and for the signed property forms to be maintained in residential inventory files. This process allows the embassy and consulates general to track changes to the original inventory prepared when an employee first moves into a residence. In accordance with guidance in 14 FAM 414.5, the accountable property officer must establish and enforce effective internal requisitioning and issuing procedures to document nonexpendable property transactions. The lack of property transfer documentation is an internal management control weakness that increases the risk of inaccurate property records and loss of assets.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Canberra should document nonexpendable property transfers in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Mission Did Not Use Electronic Scanners to Inventory Residential Assets

Mission Australia did not consistently use electronic barcode scanners to conduct residential inventories. The ILMS data by location report for the 3 years prior to the inspection showed property management staff mission-wide inventoried between 4.2 percent and 78.9 percent of assets located in residential units manually instead of with electronic scanners.²⁹ Manual reconciliation of residential inventories increases the risk of property mismanagement

²⁷ ILMS is an integrated web-based system that encompasses all Department supply chain functions in one system. It is designed to upgrade Department supply chain management by improving operations in purchasing, procurement, warehousing, transportation, property management, personal effects, and diplomatic pouch and mail.

²⁸ ILMS data showed that Consulate General Perth had a non-compliance rate of 5.8 percent; Embassy Canberra, 10 percent; Consulate General Sydney, 36.7 percent; and Consulate General Melbourne, 47.2 percent.

²⁹ ILMS data showed that Embassy Canberra had a non-compliance rate of 4.2 percent, Consulate General Melbourne 31.5 percent, Consulate General Perth 68.2 percent, and Consulate General Sydney 78.9 percent.

and theft. OIG advised the embassy that the Department's preferred method of conducting residential inventory is through use of electronic scanners compatible with ILMS. The embassy agreed to start using the electronic scanners throughout the mission. Therefore, OIG did not make a recommendation on this issue.

Procurement Files Were Not Closed Out Within Required Timeframes

Mission Australia did not close out procurement files in the Department's Electronic Filing System within the required timeframes. Guidance in 14 FAH-2 H-573.2b states that contracts under simplified acquisition procedures should be closed out immediately after the contracting officer receives evidence of receipt of property and final payment. OIG found that the mission had a backlog of 2,375 procurements from FY 2015 to FY 2018 that could not be closed until procurement staff completed the next steps in the procurement closeout process. OIG also found that contracting officers had not completed the final step to close out an additional 1,020 procurements between FY 2015 through FY 2019. Mission procurement staff told OIG the Department's electronic filing system is time consuming and cumbersome to use and, as a result, staff tended to address other priorities instead. Notwithstanding these explanations, failure to close out procurement files within the required timeframe increases the risk of inaccuracies in procurement records and of internal controls issues in procurement operations.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Canberra should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Mission-Wide Inconsistencies in the Motor Vehicle Fleet Databases

OIG found inconsistencies in motor vehicle data entered into the ILMS Fleet Management Information System.³⁰ For example, Consulate General Melbourne had negative numbers for miles or kilometers driven for its fleet of four vehicles between October 1, 2018 and April 30, 2019, while Consulate General Sydney's ILMS data showed three vans averaged 55 to 62 miles per gallon during the same time period. In another example, Embassy Canberra had incorrectly listed maintenance costs of \$409,097 for one of its vehicles. According to 14 FAM 431.6-2b(7), the motor vehicle accountable officer is responsible for reviewing vehicle and driver utilization and periodically verifying data integrity. Mission staff told OIG these errors occurred because of incorrect entry of cost into the Fleet Management Information System and insufficient monitoring of motor vehicle costs. This internal control weakness increases the risk of mismanagement of vehicles and fuel.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Canberra should periodically verify the accuracy of its mission-wide motor vehicle fleet databases in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

³⁰ The Fleet Management Information System, a module within ILMS, is the Department's enterprise system for the management of all fleet operations and is designed to capture key operational data on vehicle dispatch, maintenance, and fuel.

Consul General's Driver in Melbourne Exceeded the Daily 10-Hour Duty Time Maximum

The Consul General's principal driver at Consulate General Melbourne regularly exceeded the Department's 10-hour daily duty maximum. This limit is set forth in both the Department's Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program, 14 FAM 433.8a, and 15 FAM 957.3(4). OIG found that in FY 2019, the driver exceeded the 10-hour daily limit on duty shifts 23 times over an 8-month period. This occurred because consulate general staff did not plan or staff trips appropriately to avoid exceeding the limit. Failure to enforce these standards increases the risk of injury to drivers, passengers, and the public as well as damage to U.S. Government property.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Canberra should implement procedures at Consulate General Melbourne to limit drivers' duty time to the 10-hour daily maximum in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Human Resources

Retail Price Surveys Were Outdated

Mission Australia's retail price surveys—used to set the mission's cost of living allowance—were outdated. Embassy Canberra last submitted its survey to the Department in 2016. Consulates General Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth last submitted surveys to the Department in 2009, 2010, and 2013, respectively. According to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances, Embassy Canberra should have submitted its survey in June 2018; Consulates General Melbourne and Sydney's surveys were due in July 2018; and Consulate General Perth's survey was due in February 2019. As stated in Department of State Standardized Regulation 228.2, the cost of living allowance level is based on living costs in the foreign location relative to that of Washington, D.C. To ensure that the rates accurately reflect local costs, the Office of Allowances requires posts to submit a retail price survey every 2 years.³¹ Management staff told OIG that it was unable to complete the surveys because of competing priorities. The lack of a current retail price survey increases the risk of inaccurate allowance and travel payments.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Canberra should submit all retail price surveys to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Information Management Section supported the information processing and communication needs of Embassy Canberra and the three consulates general. OIG reviewed classified, unclassified, and dedicated internet computer operations; physical protection of

³¹ OIG, *Audit of Select Cost-of-Living Allowances for American Employees Stationed in Foreign Areas* (AUD-FM-17-51, August 2017) recommended eliminating the location-specific survey data process for individual posts. Notwithstanding this recommendation, so long as the current process is still in place, the Department should ensure that it is followed correctly, which is why OIG is making a specific recommendation to address the problem at the embassy.

information technology (IT) resources; classified communication security; emergency communication preparedness; radio and telephone programs; and mail and pouch services. The Information Management Officer, who is responsible for mission-wide operations, effectively promoted innovation and new technologies and supported frequent high-profile visits to the region. Additionally, during the inspection, the section corrected 15 issues OIG identified related to access control, unapproved devices, information system monitoring, information security, and mail screening. However, OIG determined that the Information Management Section lacked sufficient guidance to enforce standard procedures of the mission's information security program. OIG found issues in the implementation of effective information security and program management, as detailed below and in the companion classified report.

Information Systems Security Officer Program Was Ineffective

Mission Australia's unclassified and classified Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO) program was not in compliance with requirements in 5 FAH-11 H-116 and 12 FAM 613.4. OIG found the assigned ISSOs at the embassy and consulates general did not complete required training, did not have work requirements detailing their ISSO responsibilities and did not perform their duties in accordance with Department standards. For example, OIG found ISSOs did not review users and group access for correct privilege levels or ensure users received proper approval before receiving network access. ISSOs did not regularly review mission systems for malicious activity or ensure users did not use non-Department approved IT equipment and removable media. Furthermore, OIG found ISSOs did not administer security controls relating to the installation and use of dedicated internet networks in the information programs center.

OIG identified similar issues at other embassies and Department entities and in May 2017 issued a management assistance report that highlighted widespread failures to perform ISSO duties.³² In a subsequent Department cable,³³ the Bureau of Information Resource Management requested that embassy management work with ISSOs to ensure performance of their duties by prioritizing resources to ensure that cybersecurity needs were met and documented. In this case, OIG found the section managers' failure to prioritize cybersecurity needs led to non-performance of these duties, which put the security of the Department's computer systems at risk. Without adequate management of the ISSO program, Mission Australia risks potential compromise of data, information, and networks.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Canberra should conduct the mission's information systems security officer program, including training, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

³² OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Non-Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Duties by Overseas Personnel* (ISP-17-24, May 2017).

³³ Cable 17 STATE 104970, "Documenting Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO) Duties," October 18, 2017.

Information Technology Contingency Plan Testing Was Inadequate

Section managers did not test the unclassified and classified IT contingency plans, as required by 12 FAH-10 H-232.3-1b(1-3), due to a lack of prioritization. Department guidelines require management to test these plans annually for effectiveness and to determine the mission's readiness to execute them during unplanned system outages or disruptions. Inadequate contingency plan testing prevents the mission from mitigating the risk of system and service disruptions.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Canberra should test the information technology contingency plans for the unclassified and classified networks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Information Technology Contingency Plan Training Was Not Conducted

Mission Australia did not conduct initial and annual refresher IT contingency training for employees with responsibilities in these areas. According to 12 FAH-10 H-232.2-1, management must ensure this training is delivered to employees based on their IT contingency planning roles and responsibilities. Section managers throughout the mission did not conduct this training because they had not focused on the requirement. Failure to complete initial and annual refresher IT contingency plan training impedes the section's ability to effectively and appropriately respond to unplanned systems outages or disruptions.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Canberra should conduct initial and annual refresher information technology contingency training for employees with information technology contingency planning responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Embassy Local Information Technology Configuration Control Board Did Not Fulfill Its Responsibilities

Embassy Canberra did not perform its local IT configuration control board responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. Guidance in 5 FAM 115.6-2 and 5 FAM 862.1 requires local IT configuration control boards to ensure the hardware and software installed on a network will not adversely affect existing local IT infrastructure under post control. The local IT configuration control board also must maintain a current, complete, and accurate inventory of system components reported on the Department's Integrated Management, Analytics, and Technology Resource for Information Exchange, or iMatrix.³⁴

OIG found the embassy's local IT configuration control board did not approve hardware or locally developed applications, nor did it maintain the required asset inventory. The embassy had unapproved and undocumented laptops, desktop computers, and network switches that were connected to network systems across the mission. Furthermore, the embassy used locally

³⁴ iMatrix is the Department's tool for organizing and tracking its IT investments, projects, and assets, including services, systems, and products.

developed software applications without board approval or iMatrix registration. OIG found embassy management did not adequately oversee the local configuration control board's operations. OIG also found similar procedural deficiencies more widely in the Department, as reported in a recent audit on local configuration control boards.³⁵ Without accurate review, testing, and inventory of IT assets, Embassy Canberra is at risk of inadequate IT security controls to protect its information and networks.

Recommendation 22: Embassy Canberra should perform its local information technology configuration control board responsibilities in accordance with Department standards.
(Action: Embassy Canberra)

Spotlight on Success: Consulate General Perth's Centralized Program Improved Workstation Deployment

Even though there are areas for improvement in Mission Australia's overall implementation of an effective information security program, OIG found a practice at Consulate General Perth that was worthy of spotlighting. Specifically, the consulate general's Information Systems Center centralized the management and configuration of its operating systems, applications, and user settings (also known as Group Policy management) in an Active Directory environment. Use of the Group Policy management console facilitated rapid deployment of workstation configuration updates to keep them current with Department standards. The console provides administrators with a streamlined dashboard-style view of all the assets under their control and combines the functionality of multiple tools, allowing administrators to configure changes more quickly and consistently. As a result, Information Systems Center staff were able to maintain up-to-date systems configurations, which contributed to the consulate general's high, A+ compliance ratings against the Department's standards. The consulate general maintained this rating for the 6 months prior to the inspection and, on several occasions, had the top rating in the Department.

³⁵ OIG, *Audit of the Department of State's Local Configuration Control Boards* (AUD-IT-19-36, July 2019).

RECOMMENDATIONS

OIG provided a draft of this report to Department stakeholders for their review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued the following recommendations to Embassy Canberra. The embassy's complete response can be found in Appendix B.¹ The embassy also provided technical comments that were incorporated into this report, as appropriate.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, the Office of the Legal Adviser, and the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions, should determine which U.S. Government personnel in Australia are under chief of mission authority, in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with EAP, L, and M/SS)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an expected completion date of April 2020.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra determined which U.S. Government personnel in Australia are under chief of mission authority, in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Canberra should implement procedures to review staffing levels in accordance with Department standards for the National Security Decision Directive 38 process. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra implemented procedures to review staffing levels in accordance with Department standards for the National Security Decision Directive 38 process.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Canberra should conduct its mission-wide First- and Second-Tour employee program in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra conducted its mission-wide First- and Second-Tour employee program in accordance with Department guidance.

¹ OIG received Embassy Canberra's response on February 13, 2020.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Office of Civil Rights, should nominate Equal Employment Opportunity counselors in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with S/OCR)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra nominated Equal Employment Opportunity counselors in accordance with Department guidance.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Canberra should conduct records retirement in accordance with Department records management standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an expected completion date of March 1, 2020.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra retired records in accordance with Department records management standards.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Canberra should update its standard operating procedures and checklist and provide staff training in order to maintain grant files as required by Department and Federal assistance guidance. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra neither agreed nor disagreed with this recommendation. However, the embassy noted it developed a detailed standard operating procedure for grants, it uses the Bureau of Administration's checklist for the Federal assistance award file, and it hosted a refresher training for public diplomacy staff across Mission Australia.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra updated its standard operating procedures and checklist and trained staff in order to maintain grant files as required by Department and Federal assistance guidance.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should dispose of property numbers R48 and R49 at Kalgoorlie Crescent in accordance with Department guidelines and put up to \$896,849 to better use. (Action: Embassy Canberra in coordination with OBO and EAP)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an expected completion date of September 2020.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra disposed of property numbers R48 and R49 at Kalgoorlie Crescent in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureaus of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, should reprogram additional Diplomatic and Consular Program-funded Information Management positions to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services-funded positions, in accordance with Department standards, and put funds of \$243,993 over 3 years per position to better use. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with EAP and CGFS)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra reprogrammed Diplomatic and Consular Program-funded Information Management positions to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services-funded positions, in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Canberra should de-obligate unliquidated obligations totaling \$408,688 and put the funds to better use. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

During the inspection, the financial management staff de-obligated the invalid prior year obligation listed above. As a result, this recommendation was closed, and the funds involved (\$408,688) were put to better use.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Canberra should establish a schedule that allows the alternate cashier at each post to work as the principal cashier, in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra established a schedule that allows the alternate cashier at each post to work as the principal cashier, in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Canberra should complete and document safety certifications, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation of safety certifications, in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should bring the residential safety program for Department of Defense personnel under chief of mission authority into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with OBO and EAP)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the residential safety program for Department of Defense personnel under chief of mission authority complies with Department of State standards.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Canberra should bring the mission's fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an expected completion date of March 2020.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Mission Australia's fire protection program complies with Department standards.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Canberra should document nonexpendable property transfers in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra documented nonexpendable property transfers in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Canberra should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra closed out procurement files in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Canberra should periodically verify the accuracy of its mission-wide motor vehicle fleet databases in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra periodically verified the accuracy of its mission-wide motor vehicle fleet databases in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Canberra should implement procedures at Consulate General Melbourne to limit drivers' duty time to the 10-hour daily maximum in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra implemented procedures at Consulate General Melbourne to limit drivers' duty time to the 10-hour daily maximum in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Canberra should submit all retail price surveys to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra submitted all retail price surveys to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Canberra should conduct the mission's information systems security officer program, including training, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Mission Australia's information systems security officer program, including training, is conducted in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Canberra should test the information technology contingency plans for the unclassified and classified networks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra tested the information technology contingency plans for the unclassified and classified networks in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Canberra should conduct initial and annual refresher information technology contingency training for employees with information technology contingency planning responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra conducted initial and annual refresher information technology contingency training for appropriate employees, in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 22: Embassy Canberra should perform its local information technology configuration control board responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: In its January 16, 2020, response, Embassy Canberra concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Canberra performed its local information technology configuration control board responsibilities in accordance with Department standards.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Title	Name	Arrival Date
Chiefs of Mission:		
Ambassador	Arthur Culvahouse	03/2019
Deputy Chief of Mission/Chargé ²	James Carouso	06/2016
Acting Deputy Chief of Mission	Michael Heath	07/2016
Constituent Posts:		
Consulate General Melbourne	Michael Kleine	08/2018
Consulate General Perth	Rachel Cooke	08/2016
Consulate General Sydney	Sharon Hudson-Dean	09/2018
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	John Dockery	09/2017
Country-wide Consular Coordinator	Linda Daetwyler	08/2016
Political	John Hennessey-Niland	01/2017
Economic (acting)	Steven Dyokas	07/2018
Public Affairs	Gavin Sundwall	08/2018
Regional Security	Nick Pietrowicz	11/2018
Other Agencies:		
Department of Agriculture	Rey Santella	11/2017
Defense Attaché Office	Col Ray Powell	06/2017
Office of Defense Cooperation	Lt Col Brian Moore	08/2018
Legal Attaché	Tom Schultz	07/2017
Drug Enforcement Administration	Kevin Merkel	07/2017
Department of the Treasury (Internal Revenue Service)	Tai Lee	06/2016
Department of Homeland Security (Immigration Control and Enforcement)	Phillip Chaves	07/2018

Source: Generated by OIG from data provided by Embassy Canberra.

² The Deputy Chief of Mission/Chargé departed post in May 2019.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted from March 18 to September 11, 2019, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2012 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

Objectives and Scope

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive Officer of USAGM, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and USAGM. 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 and U.S. interests are 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 inspections, OIG uses a risk-based approach to prepare for each inspection; reviews pertinent records; circulates surveys and compiles the results, as appropriate; conducts interviews with Department and on-site personnel; observes daily operations; and reviews the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, and organizations affected by the review. OIG uses professional judgment, along with physical, documentary, testimonial, and analytical evidence collected or generated, to develop findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



*Embassy of the United States of America
Canberra, Australia*

January 16, 2020

UNCLASSIFIED

TO: OIG – Sandra Lewis, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

THRU: East Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau, Atul Keshap, Acting

FROM: U.S. Embassy, Ambassador Arthur B. Culvahouse

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Inspection of Mission Australia

Mission Australia has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by the OIG. Also included are additional changes requested respectively by MSS and Consul General Sydney.

OIG Recommendation 1: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, the Office of the Legal Adviser, and the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, should determine which U.S. Government personnel in Australia are under chief of mission authority, in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with EAP, L, and M/PRI)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Canberra, including the Management and Defense Attaché offices, INDOPACOM, and the Department of State (DOS) EAP Executive Office, in coordination with Office of the Legal Adviser (L) and the Office of Management Strategy and Solutions (formerly known as M/PRI), are working to determine which DoD personnel in Australia are under COM authority. Following a position by position review of the status of the various DOD personnel in Australia, Post wrote to INDOPACOM on December 10, 2019 asking for their concurrence/opinion about which personnel were under INDOPACOM command and which were under COM authority. Post provided a copy of this letter to L and M/PRI on January 6, 2020. The review conducted by the 337th Air Support Unit, Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Office identified three categories of DoD personnel – those that are believed to be clearly under COM authority, those that are believed to be clearly under INDOPACOM's command or other commands, and those that require further clarification. In Post's letter to INDOPACOM, we asked for concurrence with the JAG's identification of DoD personnel clearly under COM authority and clearly under INDOPACOM command, and to identify the appropriate category for the remainder of the DoD personnel. Post awaits INDOPACOM's reply. Expected completion is April 2020.

The point of contact for this memorandum is John Dockery, Management Counselor.

OIG Recommendation 2: Embassy Canberra should implement procedures to review staffing levels in accordance with Department standards for the National Security Decision Directive 38 process. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Post concurs with this recommendation. Management and the Executive Office finalized an NSDD-38 process memo which agencies use to notify the Ambassador of an office's interest adding or subtracting employees at post and the requesting office must show how they contribute to mission ICS goals and who will be responsible for safety, security, where they will be officed, and the level of ICASS support needed.

The point of contact for this memorandum is John Dockery, Management Counselor.

OIG Recommendation 3: Embassy Canberra should conduct its mission-wide First-and Second-Tour employee program in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Post concurs with this recommendation. The DCM and CGs have implemented a FAST officer (FASTO) program that is appropriate for each post. A Mission-wide FASTO conference took place in October to further enhance the FASTO program in Australia. (See attachment for FASTO conferences held for the last three years.)

Embassy Canberra took the lead in hosting the 2019 Mission Australia Reporting Officers Conference on November 18-20. The Mission's 22 reporting officers convened in Canberra to participate in workshops and discussions with A/S David Stilwell, Ambassador Culvahouse, and Acting DCM John Hennessey-Niland. The conference exposed Australia's reporting officers to the priorities of the Department and the Front Office, while also offering them the opportunity to discuss and shape the Mission's policy priorities. The officers also worked on integrating reporting plans, coordinating visits, and managing contacts between the Embassy and the consulates. The conference increased the officer's professional development by instituting a tradecraft session on impactful writing that helped officer's tailor their writing styles to be more efficient and impactful. The Embassy FAST program has a plan of activities and engagement opportunities for 2020, supported by the Embassy Front Office, to ensure continued professional development and leadership opportunities.

Consulate Melbourne FAST Officer Programs consists of five pillars. Each FAST officer, regardless of section or cone, will have the opportunity to (1) draft a reporting cable; (2) serve as control officer; (3) organize a representational event; (4) speak publicly on behalf of the USG; and (5) serve on a mission- or post-wide management committee. In addition, the CG meets the FASTOs quarterly as a group for a professional development seminar; individually twice a year for scheduled counselling sessions; and for individual consultations on an as-needed basis.

Consulate Sydney continues to provide activities and opportunities for FAST officers to gain additional experience outside of their everyday responsibilities, including representational events, serving as a control officer, and participation in Mission Australia's Professional

Development day for FAST officers. Consulate Sydney also manages a spreadsheet of FAST opportunities, which is updated weekly and tracks activities and officer involvement.

Consulate Perth has no FAST officers at post. All Foreign Service Officer positions are mid-level.

The point of contact for this memorandum is John Hennessey-Niland, A/DCM.

OIG Recommendation 4: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Office of Civil Rights, should nominate Equal Employment Opportunity counselors in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with S/OCR)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra in coordination with S/OCR concurs with this recommendation. EEO Counselors at Embassy Canberra and Consulate Sydney are now in place and trained, and the certified EEO Counselor at Consulate Melbourne remains in place. There are now certified EEO Counselors at Embassy Canberra as well as Consulates Sydney and Melbourne. Consulate Perth, with less than 50 employees, will utilize EEO Counselors from one of the other Mission Australia Posts.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Roy Srinivasan, Regional Human Resources Officer.

OIG Recommendation 5: Embassy Canberra should conduct records retirement in accordance with Department records management standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. The Political Section was in compliance by the end of the inspection. The Economic Section is now compliant with records retirement requirements. The consulate Political/Economic sections face a more difficult time coming into compliance, due to lack of staff and resources. Consulate Sydney's records retirement is in progress. The anticipated completion is now mid-January 2020. Consulate Perth's records retirement is in progress and anticipates completing the records retirement by March 1, 2020. Consulate Melbourne's records retirement is currently up to date and the Embassy provided refresher training to the consulate.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Peter Dyaico, Acting Political Counselor, Doug Sonnek, Economic Counselor, Consuls General Sharon Hudson-Dean, Michael Kleine, and David Gainer.

OIG Recommendation 6: Embassy Canberra should update its standard operating procedures and checklist and provide staff training in order to maintain grant files as required by Department and Federal assistance guidance. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra has addressed this recommendation. In consultation with the Administration Bureau's Office of the Procurement Executive (A/OPE) of

the Department of State, Embassy Canberra drafted and implemented a detailed standard operating procedure for grants in August 2019. Embassy Canberra is also now using A/OPE's checklist for the federal assistance award file in the State Assistance Management System Overseas (SAMS Overseas) application. Public diplomacy supervisors regularly spot check grant files in SAMS Overseas to ensure compliance with federal regulations and that all files are up-to-date and accounted for. Embassy Canberra worked with A/OPE to host a two-day refresher training for public diplomacy staff across Mission Australia in October 2019. Since the OIG inspection, four additional public diplomacy LE Staff across Mission Australia have obtained grants officer representative (GOR) certificates; three more staff are on track to receive GOR certificates by the end of January 2019, following additional required distance learning courses.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Gavin Sundwall, Counselor for Public Affairs.

OIG Recommendation 7: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should dispose of property numbers R48 and R49 at Kalgoorlie Crescent in accordance with Department guidelines and put up to \$896,849 to better use. (Action: Embassy Canberra in coordination with OBO and EAP)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra in coordination with OBO and EAP concurs with this recommendation. Post sent 19 Canberra 930 to OBO requesting the sale of the R48 and R49 properties. On 11/14/2019 OBO sent a cable (19 State 120050) authorizing the marketing and sale of the two Kalgoorlie properties. OBO is currently in the process of hiring the broker and has also initiated appraisals on the properties. OBO is working closely with post throughout the process and awaiting their response to contract for local counsel services. It is expected to be sold by September 2020 after the current occupant departs post.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Brian Cristiani, Assistant General Services Officer.

OIG Recommendation 8: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureaus of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Comptroller and Global Financial Services, should reprogram additional Diplomatic and Consular Program-funded Information Management positions to International Cooperative Administrative Support Services-funded positions, in accordance with Department standards, and put funds of \$243,993 over 3 years per position to better use. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with EAP and CGFS)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by converting an FO/FP-2 IMO position to ICASS beginning in FY20. The ICASS Council approved this change and the bureau funded it this year. The savings to the Department's Diplomatic and Consular Program funding totaled \$217,894 this fiscal year.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Calvin Levo, Financial Management Center Director.

OIG Recommendation 9: Embassy Canberra should de-obligate unliquidated obligations totaling \$408,688 and put the funds to better use. (Action: Embassy Canberra). During the inspection, the financial management staff de-obligated the invalid prior year obligation listed above. As a result, this recommendation was closed, and the funds involved (\$408,688) were put to better use.

Management Response: Embassy Canberra does not concur with this recommendation. During the inspection, the financial management staff de-obligated the invalid prior year obligation listed above. As a result, this recommendation was closed (per text on page 17 in OIG draft report), and the funds involved (\$408,688) were returned to the Department.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Calvin Levo, Financial Management Center Director.

OIG Recommendation 10: Embassy Canberra should establish a schedule that allows the alternate cashier at each post to work as the principal cashier, in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by mandating that alternate cashiers at each post work as principal cashier up to 3 times per quarter, in accordance with Department guidelines.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Calvin Levo, Financial Management Center Director.

OIG Recommendation 11: Embassy Canberra should complete and document safety certifications, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by documenting POSHO Certification for all residences. 101 leased houses and 53 Government owned houses are in the housing pool. 153 houses have received POSHO certifications and one leased residence without certification will be terminated this summer. The GSO housing office communicates directly with FM POSHO to ensure they are aware when all required safety upgrades are completed on a leased property, prior to occupant moving in. The GSO receives automated notifications from the POSHO Certification website for each property due safety upgrades. These automated notifications serve as communication between GSO housing and POSHO to ensure safety upgrades are completed and all responsible parties are notified. All Consulate Sydney properties are currently POSHO certified and documented properly.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Johnny Shields, Facility Maintenance Manager.

OIG Recommendation 12: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should bring the residential safety

program for Department of Defense personnel operating under Annex B into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with OBO and EAP)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra along with OBO and EAP concurs with this recommendation.

M/SS (formerly M/PRI) requests that the recommendation read “**OIG Recommendation 12:** Embassy Canberra, in coordination with the Bureaus of Overseas Buildings Operations and East Asian and Pacific Affairs, should bring the residential safety program for Department of Defense personnel under Chief of Mission authority into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra, in coordination with OBO and EAP).”

Post has consulted with EAP, the Under Secretary for Management’s Office of Strategy and Solutions, and OBO to discuss next steps. Post was advised that it needed to identify the DoD personnel who are under COM authority and those under INDOPACOM command (see Embassy response to recommendation one). Once it is determined who is under COM authority, Post will identify the best route forward for conducting the required residential safety checks and implementing the corresponding ICASS billing changes to fund this requirement. OBO has previously worked with Post on this issue and has agreed to allow the use of contractors to conduct the inspections for safety and health hazards as required by 15 FAM 971.1, Residential Property POSHO Certification Requirements. This will assist Post to complete housing inspections at locations that are often a great distance from the embassy. OBO can provide additional assistance and support to post as needed.

The point of contact for this memorandum is John Dockery, Management Counselor.

OIG Recommendation 13: Embassy Canberra should bring the mission’s fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Canberra sent out Management Notice MN-19-118 on 30 September 2019 to inform residents of their responsibility to perform monthly inspections on their smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Facilities maintenance ensures extinguishers in the office building are inspected. The expected completion date is March 2020.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Johnny Shields, Facility Maintenance Manager.

OIG Recommendation 14: Embassy Canberra should document nonexpendable property transfers in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Consulate Melbourne implemented a plan to use barcode scanners to document nonexpendable property transfers to residences and conduct residential inventories. Embassy Canberra currently documents nonexpendable property (NXP) transfers in accordance with Department standards. The Consulates have applied renewed focus on ensuring that NXP transfers to/from residences

during furniture adjustments are properly documented and all such transfers are being properly documented in accordance with Department standards. Embassy Canberra will develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Mission Australia. Each consulate will be responsible for implementing the SOP at their location. In addition to the SOP, Embassy Canberra will continue to assist the consulates in monitoring their data and will help where needed and requested.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Ryan Ruta, Supervisory General Services Officer.

OIG Recommendation 15: Embassy Canberra should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Procurement staff and contracting officers across the mission have completed and closed approximately two-thirds of all outstanding eFiles identified at the time of the inspection. Mission procurement staff and contracting officers continue to place emphasis on completing the entire procurement process through final payment for on-going and new procurements as well as maintaining sustained efforts to eliminate the remaining one-third of the backlog identified during the inspection.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Ryan Ruta, Supervisory General Services Officer.

OIG Recommendation 16: Embassy Canberra should periodically verify the accuracy of its mission-wide motor vehicle fleet databases in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Manual data entry is the only way to currently enter the information into Fleet Management Information System and ILMS, which results in occasional errors. The above discrepancies have been fixed, and Embassy Canberra's motor vehicle staff will continue to assist the consulates in monitoring their data and will offer training and assistance where needed and requested. Embassy Canberra will develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Mission Australia. Each consulate will be responsible for implementing the SOP at their location. The motor vehicle accountability officer, through the A/GSO, will review vehicle and driver utilization and periodically verify data integrity.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Brian Cristiani, Assistant General Services Officer.

OIG Recommendation 17: Embassy Canberra should implement procedures at Consulate Melbourne to limit drivers' duty time to the 10-hour daily maximum in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Consulate Melbourne adjusted driver schedules to ensure they drive for less than 10 hours and hired

contract drivers in order to fully comply with the 10-hour daily maximum duty time for all drivers.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Leah Thorstenson, Management Officer.

OIG Recommendation 18: Embassy Canberra should submit all retail price surveys to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Canberra and Consulate Sydney have completed and submitted the retail price survey for 2019 to the Office of Allowances. However, per guidance from the Office of Allowances, Mission Australia has been informed that the office of allowances has outsourced the COLA process per OIG Audit AUD-FM-17-51 and will no longer review post inputs per ALDAC 20 STATE 378. Consulates Melbourne and Perth will utilize the new procedure in accordance with the cable guidance.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Roy Srinivasan, Regional Human Resources Officer.

OIG Recommendation 19: Embassy Canberra should conduct the mission's information systems security officer program, including training, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Four Mission Australia IRM employees have completed the required Information Assurance (IA) training to comply with Department standards since the OIG team's departure in June 2019. The remaining 5 employees are scheduled to complete the IA training in February (IA210) and May (IA110) 2020. Embassy Canberra will be hosting two Information Assurance classes – IA210 Systems Administrators Cybersecurity Foundations in February 3-7, 2020 and IA110 ISSO Cybersecurity Foundations training in May 18-22, 2020. As a result of recently completed training, Canberra IRM staff has begun diligently documenting ISSO system actions in accordance with 5 FAM 824, 12 FAM 620 and 12 FAM 630. Please note that Canberra IRM has been fully staffed since mid-September 2019.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Murat Koclar, Information Management Officer.

OIG Recommendation 20: Embassy Canberra should test the information technology contingency plans for the unclassified and classified networks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Post has updated IT Contingency Plans (ITCP) for both OpenNet and ClassNet. Post IRM has developed and scheduled ITCP quarterly testing that will start the first quarter of 2020. This testing will be scenario-based and will have IT staff participate in a variety of roles to give them the experience

needed to tackle real emergencies. To develop this testing program, Post has documented lessons learned from actual scheduled and unscheduled outages, IT systems shutdowns and power-related maintenance outages. It should be noted that on or about February 4, 2020 Mission Australia will have all ClassNet services regionalized to Singapore. Post will re-evaluate the ClassNet ITCP at that time.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Murat Koclar, Information Management Officer.

OIG Recommendation 21: Embassy Canberra should conduct initial and annual refresher information technology contingency training for employees with information technology contingency planning responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Post is actively training staff in the use of COMMVAULT on ClassNet and Avamar on OpenNet for files restoration. For example, Canberra IRM sent a newly arrived Information Management Specialist to a special Contingency Ops training, hosted by the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) in Abu Dhabi, in November 2019. The IMS learned industry best practices by IT vendor experts and as a result, received vendor TSS certification. This certification allows Post to perform work on tempested equipment at the component level. Post IRM staff is also keeping an updated contact sheet of local IT service providers, and key IRM Offices in Washington D.C. As Post moves to a complete OpenNet virtual environment, as well as CNET regionalization project, we have started coordination with the respective IRM offices hosting Office 365, Mobile MRA, ENM teams, and Singapore/Tokyo CNR hub staff to define and understand roles and responsibilities to minimize operational impacts and to facilitate resources for continued access to Department networks.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Murat Koclar, Information Management Officer.

OIG Recommendation 22: Embassy Canberra should perform its local information technology configuration control board responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Canberra)

Management Response: Embassy Canberra concurs with this recommendation. Post has developed a new SharePoint-based Local Change Control Board (LCCB) system that will be used to track and maintain all locally approved software and hardware. It is in service now.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Murat Koclar, Information Management Officer.

ABBREVIATIONS

DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DoD	Department of Defense
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAST	First- and Second-Tour
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
ICS	Integrated Country Strategy
ILMS	Integrated Logistics Management System
ISSO	Information Systems Security Officer
LE	Locally Employed
NSDD-38	National Security Decision Directive 38
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
POSHO	Post Occupational Safety and Health Officer

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