

ATTACHMENT A

EXTERNAL REPORTING STANDARDS

The Commonwealth *Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1998* requires that the MYEFO be based on external reporting standards, and that departures from applicable external reporting standards be identified.

The major external standards used in the MYEFO are the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) accrual Government Finance Statistics (GFS) framework and Australian accounting standards, including *Australian Accounting Standard No. 31 Financial Reporting by Governments* (AAS31).

The GFS framework requires that flows and stocks be valued at current market prices (or where these are not observable, a suitable proxy indicator). While this is the case for flows in the operating statement and the cash flow statement, not all assets and liabilities in the GFS balance sheet are currently valued at current market prices. This is principally because Australian accounting standards allow reporting entities to elect to value their assets at either cost or fair value (current market value). The accounting profession is considering general valuation issues relating to liabilities. The early years of accrual budgeting have focussed on preparing robust GFS operating and cash flow statements. Refinements to the GFS balance sheet valuations of assets and liabilities will be considered over time, in consultation with the ABS, as the new framework is bedded down.

The draft ABS GFS publication (*Australian System of Government Finance Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods* Cat. No. 5514.0) requires that provisions for bad and doubtful debts be excluded from the balance sheet. This treatment has not been adopted because excluding such provisions would overstate the value of Commonwealth assets in the balance sheet (and would therefore be inconsistent with the market valuation principle).

The Commonwealth revenue and expense figures in Part III and Appendices B and E do not include goods and services tax (GST) collections and equivalent payments to the States. Under the *Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations*, all GST receipts are appropriated to the States and Territories and thus are not available for expenditure by the Commonwealth. Because the Commonwealth collects GST as an agent for the States and Territories, GST receipts are not shown as Commonwealth revenue. Estimates of GST receipts are provided in Table D2 of Appendix D.

In order to ensure the reporting of reliable budget estimates and outcomes, taxation revenue is recognised the earlier of when an assessment of a tax liability is made or cash payment is received by the Australian Tax Office or the Australian Customs Service. Accordingly, for most categories of taxation revenue, there is a short lag

between when the revenue is recognised and the time at which the underlying income (or economic activity) giving rise to the tax liability occurs. Longer lags, of up to a year, occur for some elements of company and superannuation funds taxation.

Additional information on the external reporting standards and budget concepts is provided in Appendix D.