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The Council's New Access Programme

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A new wide-ranging programme on Access to Administrative Review has been undertaken by the Administrative Review Council. The Council has been concerned for some time about possible problems relating to the accessibility of the various means by which Commonwealth administrative action may be reviewed, particularly by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, the Ombudsman and the Courts. The programme will consist of a series of projects, each of which will involve investigation and consultation by the Council and will lead to detailed recommendations to the Government. The first project in the Access programme is Notification of Review Rights which will primarily examine whether there should be a uniform legislative requirement for decision makers to notify persons of the availability of rights of review and, if so, what the content of such a notification should be.

Later stages of the programme have not yet been settled, but the sorts of issues which might be examined include:

- . whether there is sufficient community and individual understanding of the basic principles and availability of administrative review;
- . whether the mechanisms for administrative review are being under-utilised by aggrieved persons and, if so, for what reasons;

- . whether the current procedures and operations of review authorities such as the AAT, the Ombudsman and the Courts raise any unnecessary and significant barriers to access; and
- . whether there are any other ways of facilitating access to administrative review.

Over the next few months the Council will hold discussions with interested groups and persons with a view to identifying possible areas for study as part of the Access programme. Written suggestions are also encouraged.

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Administrative Review Council

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RECENT ADVICE

Administrative Review Implications of Proposals for ACT Self-Government

One of the matters dealt with in the Report of the Task Force on Implementation of ACT Self-Government (A.G.P.S., May 1984) concerns arrangements for review of ACT administrative decisions if proposals for ACT self-government are implemented. A general theme permeating the Report's recommendations on this question is the need to preserve existing rights of review even if the review structures themselves are changed. Among the options open to the ACT Government as noted in the Report are that: