

Explanatory Statement

ASA 701 Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report

Issued by the **Auditing and Assurance Standards Board**

Draft

DISCLAIMER

This document contains draft proposals to be considered at a meeting of the AUASB, and does not necessarily reflect the final decisions and/or proposals to be contained in a published Exposure Draft or Auditing Standard. No responsibility is taken by the AUASB for the results of reliance, actions or omissions to act on the basis of any information contained in this document (including appendices), or for any errors or omissions in it.



Australian Government

Auditing and Assurance Standards Board

Obtaining a Copy of this Explanatory Statement

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Reasons for Issuing Auditing Standard ASA 701

The AUASB issues Auditing Standard ASA 701 *Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report* pursuant to the requirements of the legislative provisions and the Strategic Direction explained below.

The AUASB is an independent statutory committee of the Australian Government established under section 227A of the *Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001*, as amended (ASIC Act). Under section 336 of the *Corporations Act 2001*, the AUASB may make Auditing Standards for the purposes of the corporations legislation. These Auditing Standards are legislative instruments under the *Legislative Instruments Act 2003*.

Under the Strategic Direction given to the AUASB by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), the AUASB is required, inter alia, to develop auditing standards that have a clear public interest focus and are of the highest quality.

The Auditing Standard conforms with ISA 701 *Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report* issued by the International Auditing and Assurance Standard Board.

Purpose of Auditing Standard ASA 701 *Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report*

The purpose of the Auditing Standard represents the Australian equivalent of ISA 701 *Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report* (January 2015).

Main Features

This Auditing Standard contains differences from the ISA 701, which have been made to accord with the Australian legislative environment and to maintain audit quality where the AUASB has considered there are compelling reasons to do so.

This Auditing Standard establishes requirements and provides application and other explanatory material regarding the communication of key audit matters (KAM) in the independent auditor's report.

The introduction of ASA 701 reflects the AUASB's commitment to conformity with the recent enhancements to auditor reporting developed by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. The main features of this new standard include:

- (a) Mandating the communication of KAM in the auditor's reports of audits of listed entities;
- (b) Enabling auditors of other entities to decide whether to include KAM in their auditor's reports;
- (c) How the auditor determines KAM:
 - (i) Determining from the matters communicated with those charged with governance, those matters that required significant auditor attention;
 - (ii) Taking into account areas of higher assessed risk, significant auditor judgements, involving significant management judgements and the effects of significant events or transactions; and
 - (iii) Determining the most significant matters for inclusion in the auditor's report;
- (d) How the auditor is to describe individual KAM;
- (e) Circumstances in which a matter determined to be a KAM is not communicated in the auditor's report; and

(f) The audit documentation requirements relating to KAM.

Operative Date

ASA 701 *Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report* is operative for financial reporting periods ending on or after 15 December 2016.

Process of making Australian Auditing Standards

The AUASB's Strategic Direction, *inter alia*, provides that the AUASB develop Australian Auditing Standards that:

- have a clear public interest focus and are of the highest quality;
- use the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) of the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) as the underlying standards;
- conform with the Australian regulatory environment; and
- are capable of enforcement.

Consultation Process prior to issuing the Auditing Standard

The AUASB has consulted publicly as part of its due process in developing the Auditing Standard. Exposure Draft ED 01/15 Proposed Auditing Standard ASA 701 *Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report* was issued on 30 April 2015 with a 60 day comment period.

Submissions were received by the AUASB and these were considered as part of the development and finalisation of the Auditing Standard.

Regulatory Impact Statement

A Regulatory Impact Statement Preliminary Assessment (RIA) has been prepared in connection with the preparation of ASA 701 *Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report*. The RIA has been cleared by the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR).

STATEMENT OF COMPATIBILITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

Prepared in accordance with Part 3 of the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011

Legislative Instrument: **Auditing Standard ASA 701 *Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report***

This Legislative Instrument is compatible with the human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*.

Overview of the Legislative Instrument

Background

The AUASB is an independent statutory committee of the Australian Government established under section 227A of the *Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001*, as amended (ASIC Act). Under section 336 of the *Corporations Act 2001*, the AUASB may make Auditing Standards for the purposes of the corporations legislation. These Auditing Standards are legislative instruments under the *Legislative Instruments Act 2003*.

Purpose of Auditing Standard ASA 701

The purpose of ASA 701 is to conform with the equivalent international standard on auditing, ISA 701.

Main Features

The main features of ASA 701 include:

- Mandating the communication of key audit matters (KAM) in the auditor's reports of audits of listed entities;
- Defining KAM as: "Those matters that, in the auditor's professional judgement, were of most significance in the audit of the financial report of the current period";
- How the auditor determines KAM;
- How the auditor is to describe individual KAM in the auditor's report; and
- The audit documentation requirements relating to KAM.

Human Rights Implications

The Auditing Standards are issued by the AUASB in furtherance of the objective of facilitating the Australian economy. The standards do not diminish or limit any of the applicable human rights or freedoms, and thus do not raise any human rights issues.

Conclusion

This Legislative Instrument is compatible with human rights as it does not raise any human rights issues. This Legislative Instrument is compatible with human rights as it does not raise any human rights issues due to the nature and content of the new auditing standard.