

(April 2006)

Explanatory Statement

***ASA 315 Understanding
the Entity and Its
Environment and
Assessing the Risks of
Material Misstatement***

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



Australian Government

Auditing and Assurance Standards Board

Explanatory Statement

Reasons for Issuing ASA 315 *Understanding the Entity and Its Environment and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement*

The Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (AUASB) issues Auditing Standard ASA 315 *Understanding the Entity and Its Environment and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement* due to the requirements of the legislative provisions explained below.

The *Corporate Law Economic Reform Program (Audit Reform and Corporate Disclosure) Act 2004* established the AUASB as an independent statutory body under section 227A of the *Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001*, as from 1 July 2004. 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*.

Process of making Auditing Standards

Section 1455 of the *Corporations Act 2001* and *Corporations Regulation 10.5.01* gave interim legal endorsement from 1 July 2004 to the majority of Auditing Standards made by the former Auditing & Assurance Standards Board of the Australian Accounting Research Foundation. The AUASB has reviewed the Auditing Standards and has proceeded to make them as legally enforceable Auditing Standards under the *Corporations Act 2001*.

The Auditing Standards have been made also in accordance with the Financial Reporting Council's Strategic Direction to the AUASB dated 6 April 2005, pursuant to section 225 of the *ASIC Act*.

Explanatory Statement Auditing Standard ASA 315 *Understanding the Entity and Its Environment and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement*

The Strategic Direction, *inter alia*, provides that the AUASB develops 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 a base;
- conform with the Australian regulatory environment; and
- are capable of enforcement.

In implementing the Strategic Direction, the AUASB has undertaken a process of thorough review and revision that has:

- addressed the enforceability of mandatory requirements;
- clarified auditors' obligations under the Auditing Standards;
- provided for sector neutrality in the Auditing Standards; and
- included other amendments as necessary.

**Purpose of Auditing Standard ASA 315
*Understanding the Entity and Its Environment and
Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement***

The purpose of Auditing Standard ASA 315 is to establish mandatory requirements and to provide explanatory guidance on obtaining an understanding of the entity and its environment, including its internal control, and on assessing the risks of material misstatement in a financial report audit. Auditing Standard ASA 315 is to be read in conjunction with the *Preamble to AUASB Standards*, which sets out the intentions of the AUASB on how the Auditing Standards are to be understood, interpreted and applied.

Explanatory Statement Auditing Standard ASA 315 *Understanding the Entity and Its Environment and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement*

Operative Date

This Auditing Standard is operative for financial reporting periods commencing on or after 1 July 2006.

Main changes from Auditing Standard AUS 402 (February 2004) *Understanding the Entity and Its Environment and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatements*

The main differences between ASA 315 and AUS 402 are that in ASA 315:

1. The word 'shall', in the **bold-type** paragraphs, is the terminology used to describe an auditor's mandatory requirements, whereas an auditor's degree of responsibility is described in AUS 402 by the word 'should'.
2. The explanatory paragraphs provide guidance and illustrative examples to assist the auditor in fulfilling the mandatory requirements, whereas in AUS 402 some obligations are implied within certain explanatory paragraphs. Accordingly, such paragraphs have been redrafted to clarify that the matter forms part of the explanatory guidance.

Consultation prior to issuing this Auditing Standard

The AUASB has consulted publicly as part of its due process in developing this Auditing Standard. Exposure Draft ED 1/05 *Proposed Auditing Standard: Understanding the Entity and Its Environment and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatements (Re-issuance of AUS 402)* was issued on 31 August 2005 with a 45 day comment period. Submissions were received by the AUASB and it has considered these submissions as part of the development and finalisation of this Auditing Standard.