



Premier of New South Wales

D15/06533
LAC12/107

Reference: A1104426

Mr Les Gönye
Clerk-Assistant, Table and Serjeant-at-arms
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Mr Gönye

I write concerning Report No. 17/55 of the Public Accounts Committee - *Examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audits September 2012- March 2013*.

Standing Order 303A of the Legislative Assembly requires that within six months of a report being tabled, relevant Ministers report to the House on what action, if any, the Government proposes to take in response to the recommendations of the Committee.

I am pleased to provide the House with the attached NSW Government response to this report.

Yours sincerely



MIKE BAIRD MP
Premier

Received 6/3
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IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government's response to the Public Accounts Committee's nine recommendations is outlined below.

RECOMMENDATION	DUE DATE	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE	STATUS	COMMENT
<p>1 <i>The Committee recommends that the Office of Local Government implement its proposed Performance Measurement Framework for local councils by June 2015.</i></p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p>Supports</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>Significant work has already been undertaken to progress this initiative, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · introducing a new-look <i>Comparative Information on NSW Local Government</i>, the Office of Local Government's current report comparing council performance, to include new indicators and a clearer presentation of individual council performance; · releasing a Discussion Paper seeking views on a proposed model for, and approach to, a future performance measurement framework; · preparing draft performance indicators, in collaboration with councils, their representative bodies and NSW Government agencies; and · implementing refined indicators of financial performance and infrastructure, to be reported by councils for the 2013-14 financial year. <p>The commitment to a new Performance Measurement Framework was restated in the recently announced <i>Fit for the Future</i> reform package. The <i>Fit for the Future</i> package requires councils to demonstrate current performance and submit a plan by 30 June 2015 to improve against a set of criteria and benchmarks, focusing on the key areas of financial sustainability, asset management and efficiency. The Office of Local Government has reviewed the draft Performance Measurement</p>

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				<p>Framework and indicators following the release of the <i>Fit for the Future</i> package, and incorporated these specific measures. This will ensure that a mechanism is in place to ensure that councils remain fit for the future while also being held to account for their performance more broadly.</p> <p>Upcoming actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · release of a working paper on the proposed operation of the framework and draft performance indicators, for public and sector consultation; · delivery of a new and innovative online tool for presenting and comparing council performance information by mid-2015, incorporating all available indicators including relevant <i>Fit for the Future</i> criteria and benchmarks; and · collection of community satisfaction data through surveys. <p>Over time, the Framework will be further refined – new indicators will come online and further tools to support public reporting and comparison will become available. This will align with the continued delivery of the <i>Fit for the Future</i> reform package to build a stronger local government sector through sector-led improvement.</p>
2	June 2015	Supports	Delayed	<p>This program will be implemented as part of the <i>Fit for the Future</i> reform package.</p> <p>The Government's Financial Sustainability program will commence once the <i>Fit for the Future</i> proposals have been assessed by an independent expert panel. The expert panel is expected to complete its assessment by October 2015 and make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government.</p>

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3 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services introduce legislation to facilitate the destruction of drugs and improve drug sampling and analysis procedures.	Not specified	Supports	On track	The Financial Sustainability Program is therefore not expected to commence until 2016, to ensure that the program is designed to meet the needs of councils as identified through the <i>Fit for the Future</i> process. The Department of Justice expects the Bill will be introduced early next session.
4 The Committee recommends that, following the introduction of any new drug exhibit bags, the NSW Police Force work with the Environment Protection Authority to identify appropriate facilities for the local destruction of drug exhibits.	Not specified	Supported-in-principle	On track	Discussions are currently underway between NSW Police Force and the Environment Protection Authority to identify means of safe and expeditious destruction of drug exhibits. Considerable progress has been made towards a solution satisfactory to all parties.
5 The Committee recommends that, by December 2014, the Department of Education	December 2014	Supports	Completed	The report from the data collection has been published by the NSW Skills Board. It is available at http://www.skillsboard.nsw.gov.au/publications/expectations-and-destinations-nsw-senior-secondary-students .

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and Communities publish the report from its data collection on the destinations of 2012 school leavers.				
6 The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Communities publish results from its planned destinations survey, once these become available.	December 2014 (for conducting annual survey)	Supports	On track	The Department commissioned a 2014 survey of post-school destinations of 2013 senior secondary students. The survey data has been collected and the survey report is being finalised. The 2014 report will be made publicly available via the NSW Skills Board website in 2015. Annual surveys are also planned for 2015 and 2016. These reports will also be made publicly available.
7 The Committee recommends that by June 2015, the Department of Education and Communities conduct an evaluation of the quality and appropriateness of career advice provided in schools.	June 2015	Supports	On track	The University of Melbourne has been contracted to provide a literature review, an analysis of three current data sets and to develop a methodology for an effective evaluation of the quality and appropriateness of career advice provided in schools. This work will inform the planning, including procurement processes, of the evaluation.
8 The Committee recommends that, by December 2014, the Department of Education and Communities amend	December 2014	Supports	Completed	The amended program guidelines were implemented on 1 September 2014. The program now targets students of compulsory school age (up to 17 years of age).

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<p><i>the guidelines of the Links to Learning Program to reflect the changed school leaving age.</i></p> <p>9 <i>The Committee recommends that the Public Service Commission finalise and release the package Ethics resources for government sector employees including the guideline Managing Gifts and Benefits: Minimum standards for departments and agencies by 31 August 2014.</i></p>	31 August 2014	Supports	Completed	<p>The ethics resources "Behaving Ethically: A guide for NSW government sector employees" was released on 4 November 2014 and can be accessed at http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/Sector-Reform/Ethics/Behaving-Ethically/behaving-ethically-resource-explained.</p> <p>One element of "Behaving Ethically" is a new Public Service Commissioner's direction which legally requires all Secretaries and agency heads to establish minimum standards on managing gifts and benefits in their agencies. For details on this direction, see http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/employmentportal/ethics-conduct/Behaving-Ethically/behaving-ethically-guide/section-2/managing-gifts-and-benefits-minimum-standards.</p>