

Implementation and delivery

The public sector is responsible for delivering big-budget projects and programs to bring about the outcomes and objectives that government sets. The community expects government to deliver the services and outcomes it says it will. In keeping with legislation, performance audits examine whether it has done so effectively, efficiently and economically.



Achieving results

Public sector goals are hard to achieve. Agencies do not face an easy task to achieve their targets in a complex environment with limited resources and constant change. We found that the public sector's performance was mixed. We found examples of the public sector achieving good results:

'[State schools are] now performing better than non-government schools and the Victorian workers' compensation scheme in returning injured employees back to work earlier.'

—*Follow up of Management of Staff Occupational Health and Safety in Schools* (August 2015)

'[The Parole System Reform Program] has improved the operations of the APB [Adult Parole Board]. Board members now have sufficient time to consider each case, and improved ICT systems allow easier access to information and the improved recording of decisions made.'

—*Administration of Parole* (February 2016)

We found several instances where the public sector did not achieve intended results, or fully implement projects and programs.

'I also found a real risk that the expected benefits will not be achieved. Current forecasts predict consumers will only receive approximately 80 per cent of the benefits identified in the most recent 2011 cost-benefit analysis—provided that all issues and risks are effectively mitigated—and as costs increase over the life of the program, the final net cost to consumers is likely to rise above \$319 million.'

—*Realising the Benefits of Smart Meters* (September 2015)

Project management

Several audits found that projects and programs were delivered late and over budget. Infrastructure and services were not available as soon as intended, and the state paid millions of dollars more than planned, particularly in relation to ICT and capital projects.

'None of the ICT Projects considered in this audit were completed or will be completed as initially budgeted. One of the six projects examined finished on schedule. One project was terminated prior to system delivery, six years after the planned completion date and having cost twice the intended budget. Most of the six projects examined in this audit faced significant challenges at various points during implementation.'

—*Digital Dashboard: Status Review of ICT Projects and Initiatives – Phase 2* (March 2016)

Self-assessment questions

- 1 Is my agency achieving its objectives?
- 2 How informative are the explanations given for any target shortfalls?
- 3 How is my agency monitoring project timeliness and spending?
- 4 How does my agency respond when projects are in danger of going over budget or schedule?