

# Stakeholder engagement

This year, several of our audits assessed how well agencies engage with stakeholders, including the public. This engagement has become more frequent, reflecting the impact it has on effective public sector administration. One of the Victorian Special Minister of State's six directions for reforming the public sector includes considering how citizens and communities co-create public value.



## Getting input from stakeholders

We found good examples of stakeholders being consulted to collect information, opinions and advice.

*'The department is working to improve its complaints processes and assess the feasibility of an independent advocacy role for children and young people in residential care, which will contribute further to meeting their needs. This has involved engaging with children and young people in residential care to include their voice in identifying the issues and the possible actions to address these.'*

—*Follow Up of Residential Care Services for Children* (June 2016)

However, we did see shortcomings. Sometimes, agencies did not consult key stakeholders, or did not consult in a well-planned way.

*'DEDJTR engages extensively with non-government stakeholders on livestock biosecurity matters. However, this engagement has not occurred in line with an overarching strategic approach. The needs of, and risks to, non-government stakeholder groups—including livestock industries and private veterinary practitioners—have not been systematically assessed.'*

—*Biosecurity: Livestock* (August 2015)

## Communicating to stakeholders

Communications activities can often be overlooked. Failing to communicate can significantly affect outcomes, effective implementation, the uptake of a service and stakeholders' perceptions. Although some agencies' communications and awareness activities were effective, others' were not.

*'The lack of a PSO public awareness strategy means that agencies are not capitalising on the presence of PSOs to improve perceptions of safety and increase patronage on trains after 6 pm.'*

—*Public Safety on Victoria's Train System* (February 2016)

## Self-assessment questions

- 1 Do we have a stakeholder engagement plan for the whole organisation?
- 2 Is stakeholder engagement given adequate consideration in planning key projects, programs and activities?
- 3 Do we carry out adequate communications and awareness activities for stakeholders?
- 4 Do we review how effectively we engage stakeholders?