

Slide 1



This presentation provides an overview of the Victorian Auditor-General's report *Follow up on Oversight and Accountability of Committees of Management*.

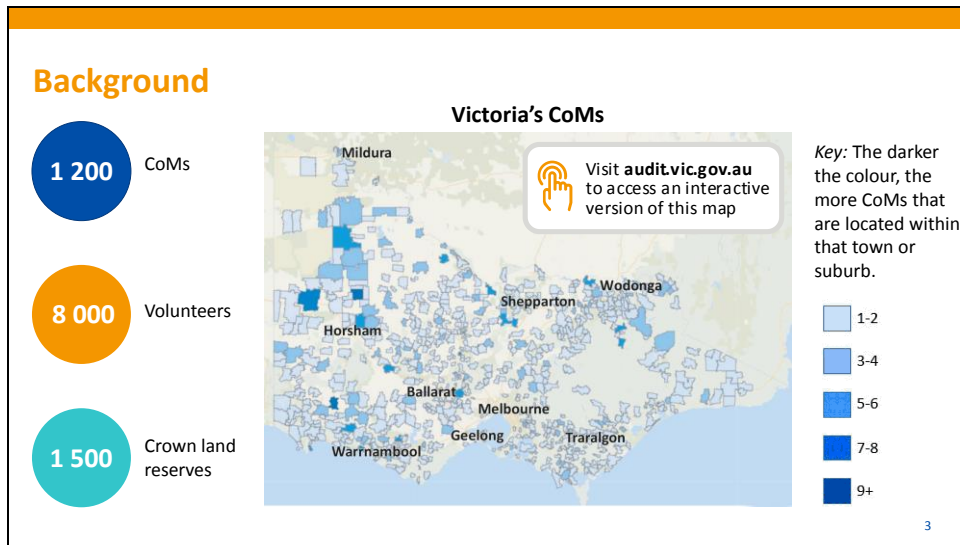
Overview

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|  <p>Follow up program</p> <p>Aim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess progress• Improve accountability |  <p><i>Oversight and Accountability of Committees of Management</i></p> <p>Former Department of Environment and Primary Industries did not ensure that committees of management (CoM) were managing Crown land reserves appropriately</p> |  <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None of 11 recommendations complete• Underlying issues have not been resolved |
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This report forms part of our follow up audit program, where we assess agencies' progress in implementing recommendations from selected audits.

This report follows up on our 2014 audit—*Oversight and Accountability of Committees of Management*, which found that the former Department of Environment and Primary Industries did not take sufficient steps to ensure that committees of management, or CoMs, were managing Crown land reserves appropriately.

This audit found that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, or DELWP, has not fully addressed any of the 11 recommendations we made in our 2014 audit, and the underlying issues have not been resolved.



There are more than 8 000 Victorians who are members of CoMs. A CoM can be a group of volunteers who are appointed through a formal selection process such as an expression of interest process or a public election.

Through their volunteer labour, these groups maintain and oversee almost 1 500 Crown land reserves. The map on this slide shows the committees' main contact location.

Visit audit.vic.gov.au to access an interactive version of this map.

Background

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for Crown land reserves
 - Delegates land management of specific reserves to CoMs
- Reserves include:
 - sporting grounds
 - parks and gardens
 - international tourist precincts

The Great Ocean Road



Photo courtesy of PHTGRPHER Everyday/Shutterstock.com

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DELWP is responsible for Crown land reserves. Crown land reserves are areas of public land set aside for the benefit and enjoyment of Victorians. For specific reserves, DELWP delegates the land management to CoMs.

Reserves managed by CoMs include local sporting grounds, parks and gardens as well as historic buildings and international tourist precincts such as the Phillip Island Nature Reserve and the Great Ocean Road.

Appropriateness of CoMs as a land management model

 2014 audit found appointing a CoM not always the most effective or efficient way to manage a reserve

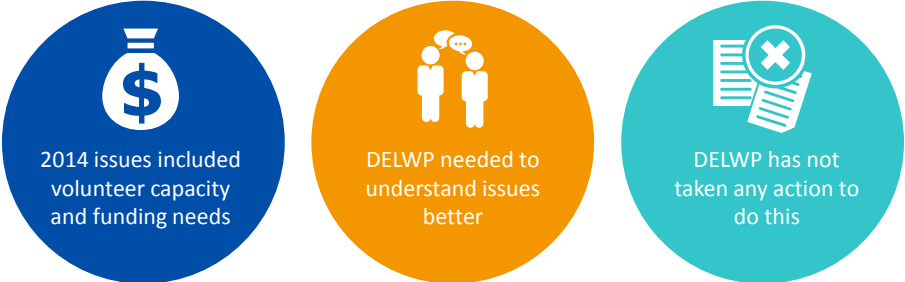
 Opportunities to re-align reserves to a more appropriate land manager not actively pursued

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There are four key themes to our findings.

The first is the appropriateness of CoMs as a land management model. Our 2014 audit highlighted several scenarios where appointing a CoM was not the most effective or efficient way to manage a reserve. One example is that land with a hospital on it might be better managed by the government department responsible for hospitals. DELWP has not actively pursued opportunities we identified to re-align reserves to a more appropriate land manager.

Poor information and understanding of risks and issues



The slide features three circular icons arranged horizontally. The first icon is a blue circle containing a white money bag with a dollar sign. The second icon is an orange circle containing two white human figures with speech bubbles above them. The third icon is a teal circle containing a white document with a magnifying glass over it, and a red 'X' mark.

2014 issues included volunteer capacity and funding needs

DELWP needed to understand issues better

DELWP has not taken any action to do this

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The second theme is around poor information and understanding of risks and issues. Our 2014 audit identified five issues, including CoMs' volunteer capacity and their funding needs, which DELWP needed to understand better through review, analysis or evaluation. DELWP has not taken any action to do this.

Inadequate support and oversight



DELWP:

- published guidelines and a website
- developed a new approach to supporting CoMs

BUT Approach too onerous

- Activities not occurring
- Some CoMs not receiving any support or oversight


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Another theme is inadequate support and oversight. As we recommended in the original audit, DELWP has published guidelines and a website for CoMs, and it has developed a new approach to supporting CoMs that includes details on annual reviews and inductions for new volunteers. However, the approach is too onerous for it to implement, so several activities are not occurring, and some types of CoMs are receiving no support or oversight at all.

Public safety risks

462 CoM volunteers responded to our survey

106 Different examples of public safety risks



Former Royal Mint

- Five-metre high brick walls at risk of falling
- Three-year delay in getting an engineering assessment
- Two-year delay before repair work began

The former Royal Mint's wall on LaTrobe Street, Melbourne. Photo courtesy of Beauchamp Hogg Spano Consultants.


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The final theme concerns public safety risks.

We surveyed CoM volunteers for this audit and 462 responded. Participants told us about 106 different examples of public safety risks that they were managing on their reserves.

One CoM did not have enough resources to get trees removed after an expert advised they were dangerous. Another example involved the former Royal Mint, which has five-metre high brick walls at risk of falling onto a busy city street. The walls are now being fixed, but there was a three-year delay in getting an engineering assessment—which the Building Commission had recommended after a fatal incident with some similar walls—and a further two-year delay before repair work began.

Next steps



- Underlying issues unresolved
- Recommendations still relevant
- DELWP must take a more strategic, informed and risk-based approach to CoMs

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Overall, the underlying issues remain unresolved. We did not make any new recommendations as the 2014 recommendations remain relevant.

DELWP must take a more strategic, informed and risk-based approach to CoMs to ensure the public land and assets they manage remain safe and protected for all Victorians.

For further information, please view the full report on our website:
www.audit.vic.gov.au

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