

Appendix A:

Submissions and comments

We have consulted with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, the Department of Treasury and Finance and the 8 public universities in Victoria, and we considered their views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report, or relevant extracts, to those agencies and asked for their submissions and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Responses received

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Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions	A-2



Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

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Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
[REDACTED]

Dear Auditor-General

**DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO DRAFT VAGO REPORT – RESULTS OF 2023 AUDITS:
UNIVERSITIES**

Thank you for your correspondence of 20 May 2024 inviting the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (the department) to provide submissions or comments on the proposed report on *Results of 2023 Audits: Universities*.

The department welcomes the report and its findings. I note your conclusion that the financial reports of the universities and their controlled entities are reliable, and I support the recommendation made.

The 8 university Acts contain no general Ministerial power of direction over universities. The legislative responsibilities of the Victorian Minister for Skills and TAFE under the Acts are limited to making some Council appointments, approving the acquisition, disposal and leasing of some land, approving certain commercial activities, and approving the amendment of university statutes. I therefore support, rather than formally accept, the recommendation in the report.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the work of VAGO and the Victorian universities that has led to the clear audit opinions for all Victorian universities this year.

If your team would like to discuss this matter further, you may contact Ms Laura Lo Bianco-Smith, Executive Director, ACFE, Higher Education and Workforce, Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, on [REDACTED] or by email: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Tim Ada
Secretary

27/05/2024

