

Appendix 3: About the audit

Audit objective

This audit assessed whether rail agencies have plans and strategies to maintain or improve performance in getting the growing number of rail passengers to their destinations on time.

Audit criteria

We addressed the audit objective by assessing performance against the following criteria:

- Rail agencies have reliable information on performance in getting rail passengers to their destinations on time, and are taking or planning remedial action to address any performance shortcomings
- Rail agencies have developed plans and strategies to get the predicted increased number of rail passengers to their destinations on time in future
- Rail agencies have plans to improve communication to assist passengers get to their destinations on time.

Audit scope and focus

The audit focussed on suburban services operated by Sydney Trains and intercity services operated by NSW Trains. It looked at punctuality from the perspectives of both train operations and customers.

Audit exclusions

The audit did not:

- examine coaches and buses operated by Sydney Trains and NSW Trains including replacement buses used during service disruptions
- assess in depth the adequacy of planned improvements or the validity of forecasts of future passenger demand
- challenge the appropriateness of punctuality performance targets.

Audit approach

Our procedures included:

- interviews with relevant staff in TfNSW, Sydney Trains, and NSW Trains
- examination of relevant documents, including legislation, policies, strategies, guidelines, procedures, reports, reviews
- statistical analysis of recent train punctuality data
- consultations with representatives of key stakeholders
- research into better practices.

Expert advice was provided by Ian Kearns.

The audit approach was complemented by quality assurance processes within the Audit Office to ensure compliance with professional standards.

Audit methodology

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Audit Standards ASAE 3500 on performance auditing. The Standard requires the audit team to comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance and draw a conclusion on the audit objective. Our processes have also been designed to comply with the auditing requirements specified in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided by Transport for NSW, Sydney Trains and NSW Trains. In particular, we wish to thank the liaison officers and staff who participated in interviews and provided material relevant to the audit.

Audit team

Rod Longford and Ian Kearns conducted the performance audit, assisted by Michelle Ravindran, Huntley Evans and Francois Chee. Giulia Vitetta was the Engagement Reviewer.

Audit cost

Including staff costs, travel and overheads, the estimated cost of the audit was \$375,000.