



# Appendix five – About the audit

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## Audit objective

This audit assessed how well the Department of Education supports secondary schools to promote and support the wellbeing of their students.

## Audit criteria

We addressed the audit objective with the following criteria:

1. Does the Department support schools to effectively promote and support the wellbeing of students?
  - a) The Department has evidence-based policies and guidance to support schools in promoting the wellbeing of students.
  - b) Roles and responsibilities to support student's wellbeing are well defined.
  - c) The Department effectively targets resources so that secondary schools are supported to promote the wellbeing of students.
  - d) The Department identifies gaps in how schools are promoting the wellbeing of students and assists schools to address them in a timely way.
  - e) The Department facilitates cross-agency collaboration to support timely and easy referral processes to relevant services.
2. Are secondary schools promoting and supporting the wellbeing of students?
  - a) Schools effectively use the Department's policies, guidelines, resources and links with other agencies to promote the wellbeing of their students.
  - b) Schools have the required capacity and capability to promote the wellbeing of their students.
  - c) Schools assess their students' wellbeing needs and address them in a timely way.
  - d) Schools refer students with identified/assessed wellbeing needs to relevant services and work with these services to assist on student's progress.

## Audit exclusions

The audit did not:

- examine support for the wellbeing of students at TAFE, non-government secondary schools and primary schools
- examine Commonwealth Government programs for mental health and wellbeing (e.g. the National School Chaplaincy Program)
- examine NESA's registration or curriculum requirements
- examine school for specific purpose, connected communities schools, hospital schools, schools in the Juvenile Justice establishment, distance education, home schooling or specialist support classes in schools
- examine programs offered by other agencies or service providers in an environment external to schools (e.g. the service provision in specific mental health hospital units, services offered by Headspace outside school)
- question the merits of government policy objectives.

## Audit approach

Our procedures included:

1. Interviewing:
  - a) key staff in the Department of Education responsible for promoting and supporting student wellbeing
  - b) key staff in selected schools responsible for promoting and supporting student wellbeing
  - c) key stakeholders, representatives of principals, youth services, school counsellors, school psychologists, teachers, and student support officers.
2. Examining:
  - a) the Department's strategy, plans, resources, policies and guidance on planning and promoting the wellbeing of their students
  - b) different wellbeing positions in the Department and schools and their key roles and responsibilities
  - c) the Department's methodology and formulas used to allocate wellbeing staff and resources in schools
  - d) the Department's processes for identifying gaps in how schools are promoting the wellbeing of students
  - e) the Department's arrangements with other agencies to support timely and easy referral processes to relevant services
  - f) school's use of the Department's policies, guidelines, resources and links with other agencies to promote the wellbeing of their students
  - g) the capacity and capability of wellbeing staff in schools
  - h) school's processes to assess their students' wellbeing needs and address them in a timely way.
3. Analysing data:
  - a) on wellbeing staff, wellbeing funding and wellbeing indicators.

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

## Selection of schools

As part of the audit we visited 11 secondary/central schools in NSW. The selected schools were used to highlight different approaches to school wellbeing and implementation of the Wellbeing Framework at the local level. They were intended to form limited case studies rather than being an indicative sampling of the school population. The objective of our selection was to obtain a mix of schools based on ASGS remoteness, student population, indigenous student population, ICSEA value and other school characteristics. We visited six schools in major cities and five schools in regional areas. The selection included one central school, one single sex school and one selective school.

## Audit methodology

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Audit Standard ASAE 3500 Performance Engagements and other professional standards. The standards require 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 requirements specified in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

## **Acknowledgements**

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided by the Department of Education.

## **Audit cost**

Including staff costs, travel and overheads, the estimated cost of the audit is \$275,000.