

# **AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

## **PERFORMANCE AUDIT**

**School Annual Reports**

**Department of Education and Training**

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## **Foreword**

With education receiving intense scrutiny from the public – and a large share of the State budget – the State is increasingly holding schools accountable for results. Schools now must not only do well, but also demonstrate that they are doing well.

This is the third audit we have undertaken in this area, this time focusing on the role of school annual reports. These reports are intended to involve parents and the school community in the accountability process. They are meant to be a key element of the Department of Education and Training's School Accountability and Improvement Program.

This audit reports on how well the process is working, and calls for the introduction of more rigorous measures to promote public accountability.

Bob Sendt  
Auditor-General

September 2004



## Executive summary

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## Executive summary

In 2003 there were 750,000 students enrolled in 2,230 NSW Government schools and educational centres. NSW Government annual expenditure on State schools is around \$6.9 billion.

In 1997 the Department of Education and Training replaced performance agreements for principals with a new accountability process, based on school annual reports.

School annual reports are intended to involve parents and the school community in the accountability process, so they can see where schools are succeeding and where there is still work to be done.

In order to see how well the process was working, we examined a representative sample of recent school annual reports.

## Audit opinion

We believe that school reports are an excellent concept. However, in their present form they are not an effective means of holding a school accountable.

Successive performance audits by our Office have identified significant shortcomings in the reports. This is not so much the fault of the schools. The reporting content is largely optional. There is limited opportunity to compare performance. And the highly restrictive reporting protocols lead to reports which are not able to release important and relevant information.

There is limited involvement by the school community, and limited external review. The audit found little demonstrated reaction by the public when the high school annual reports from 2003 did not appear at all, as a result of an industrial ban. Were the reports highly valued and providing information to assist parents in relation to their children's education, a more visible reaction might have been expected.

School annual reports in NSW serve many audiences and many purposes, including that of promotion. In so doing, the reports try to satisfy the competing information needs of multiple audiences and multiple objectives.

There seems little likelihood that school annual reports in their present form and under the present arrangements will be capable of effectively meeting the accountability aspirations they were intended to fulfill or the information needs of parents. However, they offer excellent potential for both purposes and as such we believe that perseverance to improve their use is warranted.

## **Key findings**

- schools make a considerable effort to prepare school annual reports in accordance with the requirements that have been established
- the Department provides schools with a reporting template, an extensive range of 'value-added' indicators that illustrate students' academic progress over time, and a range of other data based on external test results at key points and in key areas allowing schools to interpret their students performance more accurately
- policies, legislation and regulations prohibit the release of comparative information on the effectiveness and performance of schools in terms of student achievement; although every school compares its academic performance and attendance against the state average, schools are given significant scope to 'pick and choose' indicators of their achievement, thereby allowing them to choose not to report adverse information
- school annual reports seldom provide a complete and informative picture of achievements in key learning areas. Schools tend to report student achievement selectively, focusing on the most positive results, with relatively unbalanced reporting across a range of areas. Schools generally do not include details of why they did not achieve as well as expected
- where schools have selected a specific educational management or curriculum area for evaluation, they may report the genuine findings of the evaluation, but over-emphasise the positives and understate performance issues needing attention
- the Department intended that a school self-evaluation committee would drive the evaluating and reporting process. The committee would be representative of the school community, including parents, students, and staff members. However, the self-evaluation committees do not generally function in the proactive manner envisaged
- school annual reports offer little, if any, information on teacher credentials, secondary class sizes, actual parental involvement and participation and whether the schools are properly resourced for staff, special needs, facilities and equipment.

## Recommendations

We recommend that the Department of Education and Training strengthen the role of school annual reports in promoting public accountability by:

- reporting within a more rigorous framework for monitoring and reporting the performance of schools consisting of:
  - annual student performance reporting
  - annual reports of progress against the School Management Plan
  - results of external evaluation
  - results of financial audits
- re-examining the material that schools may report to introduce a degree of school comparison and benchmarking, possibly with more emphasis on value-adding and comparisons between schools in like circumstances
- linking the school annual report to a School Management Plan focused on school-specific and systemic needs, targets, resource needs and measures including a professional learning component
- placing an outcome requirement for school annual reports on school principals with minimum reporting standards, rather than trying to specify what, when and how the content should be presented to parents and the community
- including in each school's annual report a report from the Parents and Citizens President in their area
- increasing the accessibility of school annual reports to the public by putting every school annual report on the Department's website
- establishing an accreditation scheme for schools, that could assure an adequate standard of self evaluation and reporting for a *quality endorsed* school
- establishing a means of external review, sufficiently removed from the school to ensure objectivity in reporting
- using the School Promotion package as a more effective and more flexible means of promoting the school to prospective parents than the school annual report.

## Response from the Department of Education and Training

*I refer to your letter dated 25 August 2004 concerning the Performance Audit on School Annual Reports.*

*Thank you for your final report into the operation of the school annual reports. It is extremely valuable and provides a comprehensive coverage of areas which require improvement.*

*It is my intention to implement the recommendations as soon as practicable. The issues raised in your report will necessitate changes to fundamental aspects of the school annual reporting process, and will require wide consultation and negotiation. Implementation will begin with the 2005 cycle.*

*The Department of Education and Training is already considering aspects of the recommendations that can be implemented most readily. These include the possibility of centrally providing a standard data page of information on student performance and other aspects of school operation, increased community participation in school annual reporting, and linkage to the School Management Plan.*

*Please convey my appreciation for the conduct of the review to the relevant officers involved.*

*(signed)*

*Andrew Cappie-Wood  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TAFE NSW*

*Dated: 1 September 2004*



## 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 What is a school annual report?

School annual reports are part of the Department of Education and Training's *School Accountability and Improvement Program*. The Program emphasises school self-evaluation, reporting whole-of-school information to parents, school reviews and reviews of state-wide issues such as the education of particular groups of students.

The Department intended that school annual reports be:

- a report to parents and the community about the performance and achievements of their school
- produced by every school in the public education system
- produced by a school following monitoring and evaluation of its work during the year
- written by the principal with input from the school community and assistance from a school improvement officer
- written to a framework specified by the Department of Education and Training.

**Source:** NSW Department of Education and Training, *School Accountability and Improvement in NSW Public Schools*, 1997.

All NSW public schools have prepared annual reports since 1997. The reports are public documents sent to every family in the school community and available to the wider community on request. The Department has identified the school community as the intended audience for the report and stressed the importance of using accessible language, free of educational jargon and acronyms.

**Source:** NSW Department of Education and Training, *2003 Annual School Report Support Document for Schools*, p1.

## 1.2 Why we are examining school annual reports

In 2003 there were 750,000 students enrolled in 2,230 NSW Government schools and educational centres. NSW Government annual expenditure on State schools is around \$6.9 billion. Because of the critical role they play and their use of public resources, schools should be accountable for their performance.

In 1995 the new State Government's policy of *Fairer Schools Information* held that *the present level of public information about the educational performance of schools is inadequate, misleading and unfair*.

We carried out a performance audit in 1999 on the 'School Accountability and Improvement Model' that had been introduced in 1997. As part of that audit we looked at school annual reports in the context of the model.

We found that annual school reports were falling short of their intended purpose. We reported that the reports would better achieve their purpose if they reported more extensively and consistently on a common set of indicators covering student learning, school culture and work environment.

We conducted a follow-up audit in 2001 which found that the quality and extent of performance information published in annual reports in some schools was still of concern, with a need to provide a balanced account of achievements and areas for improvement.

We have revisited this issue again now in 2004, to maintain a focus on this key mechanism of performance accountability to the community.

### **1.3 What schools in NSW are asked to report**

Schools in NSW are provided with a reporting template but have, in recent times, been given increased flexibility as to what to include in the school annual report.

While schools are required to report under specific headings, and guidelines indicate what information should be reported under these headings, the Department's protocols leave decisions about what to report and how to report to the principal and the school's self-evaluation committee. The committee is to be representative of the school community, including parents, students, and staff members.

Schools are asked to include:

- a principal's message, which could include the school's philosophy and purpose
- 'our achievements', the contents of which are optional
- 'key evaluations', the choice of which are optional, but should include one area of educational and management practice, one curriculum area, student performance including external testing and internal assessment
- 'our targets', which must include progress against any targets set the previous year, and at least one target for improvement in the coming year (the choice of which is optional)
- 'our context', which must include some information on enrolments (some content being optional but must include a table of class sizes in primary schools) and attendance (some content being optional but must include a table in set format), and may include information on other (optional) areas such as structure of classes in secondary schools, staffing, parent participation and post-school destinations

- a financial statement summary (using a set format).

**Source:** NSW Department of Education and Training, *2003 Annual School Report Support Document for Schools*.

The standard length for primary schools is eight pages, and for secondary schools 12 pages, although this can be varied.

#### 1.4 Restrictions on what schools may report

One of the key features of annual school reports is that they publish data on student performance in external tests.

The Department now has available a range of external tests: Basic Skills Tests in literacy and numeracy in Years 3 and 5, computer skills in year 6, English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) and Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) in Year 7 with optional retesting in Year 8, the School Certificate in Year 10 and the Higher School Certificate in Year 12.

However, the *Education Regulation 2001*, arising from the *Education Act 1990*, prohibits the publication of external test results in a way that ranks or otherwise compares the results of particular schools.

**Source:** *Education Regulation 2001* sec 5.

Additionally, the NSW Department of Education and Training has agreed with the NSW Teachers Federation on a number of protocols that restrict any comparison of schools, including:

- Departmental employees at system and school level, will not publish or broadcast, or aid in the publication or broadcast of any information or achievement which allows comparison between individual students or which will allow schools to be ranked in any publication or broadcast
- test results will not be used publicly to advertise or denigrate students, schools, teachers or principals
- test results are to be used in a way which takes account of social justice to ensure that unfair labelling and/or unfair comparison of particular groups of students or groups of schools does not occur.

**Source:** NSW Department of Education and Training, *Protocols for the analysis and reporting of external test data*.

## **1.5 This audit**

This audit looked at whether school annual reports had improved since the previous audits. It examined the adequacy of performance information contained in school annual reports, considering the different purposes they serve, including:

- providing public accountability
- informing parents and community members
- use by the Department for planning and resource allocation
- encouraging school improvement efforts
- promoting the school in the wider community.

We examined a representative sample comprising five per cent of recent school annual reports. The sample was selected by the audit team from a list of all government schools in NSW. The sample covered metropolitan, regional and rural communities and reflected the variety of school types within the system. It included the last two years of annual reports available from each of the selected schools (many schools did not produce an annual report in 2003 as a result of an industrial ban).

School reports were assessed against audit criteria drawn from the Audit Office's Better Practice Guide for Annual Reports, which advocates that such reports:

- report objectives that are clear and measurable
- focus on results and outcomes
- discuss results against expectations
- be complete and informative
- explain changes over time
- provide evidence of value for money and benchmarking
- discuss strategies, risks and external factors.

As these criteria were developed for the reporting of government agencies, their application was slightly modified to suit the purpose of assessing school reports.



## **2. More fully informing the community**

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## 2.1 Holding schools accountable for performance

### Intended audience

The Department has advised schools that the school community is the intended audience for the school annual report.

School annual reports involve parents and others in the school community in the accountability process so they can see where schools are succeeding and where there is still work to be done.

Most parents need a variety of information from schools, ranging from general school information to specific information relating to their own children's learning. Schools provide information in a number of ways, including:

- reports on student progress
- parent-teacher meetings
- Parents and Citizens' Association meetings
- school handouts, newsletters, and websites
- school annual reports.

Parents in some schools also receive copies of a school budget, strategic plan and management plan.

### Key accountability mechanism

However, school annual reports are the only formal documents focused on school performance that are provided routinely to all parents and to the school community generally.

Annual reports are a key mechanism by which all organisations account for their performance. Information in annual reports should clearly identify objectives, and the efficiency and effectiveness with which those objectives are achieved.

### Reporting needs

To do this, annual reports need to:

- report objectives that are clear and measurable; it is not possible for a reader of an annual report to determine what is to be achieved if the objectives are ambiguous or stated in very general terms
- focus on results and outcomes; reporting outcomes enables readers to judge the effectiveness of the organisation
- discuss results against expectations; targets are rendered meaningless if the organisation does not report results against the target
- be complete and informative; reporting needs to cover the key functions and programs and include honest coverage of both successes and setbacks
- explain changes over time; readers need consistent and sufficient information to compare results from year to year

- provide evidence of value for money; organisations need to disclose the costs involved in providing each of their main outputs, and where possible outcomes. Wherever possible they should benchmark their performance against similar organisations so as to provide readers with the opportunity to make comparisons
- discuss risks, strategies and the external operating environment; that is, the external and internal factors that affect or constrain day-to-day activities and the organisation's response to issues of significant public interest.

**Source:** The Audit Office of New South Wales, *Reporting performance: a guide to preparing performance information for annual reports*, 2000.

These criteria were modified for application to schools as outlined below.

## 2.2 Reporting objectives that are clear and measurable

In the context of school reporting, for this criterion we expected that:

- the annual report would inform parents about the school's context, its services and clients, its desired outcomes or targets for development and its achievements
- targets would be clear and measurable and define impacts on students and/or the community
- targets would be established following a rigorous evaluation process in specific areas.

### Specific areas of focus

We found that:

- school annual reports generally address why the school exists, what it stands for and what it seeks to achieve, although this may be expressed in vague terms
- schools report on specific areas that they may have assessed or where they have set specific targets
- the Department advises schools that targets should be evidence-based, linked to student learning and related to school practice.

### Expected outcomes

However, we also found that:

- few schools clearly state what they intend to achieve for their students
- few schools explain how achievements will be measured

- where schools report on specific areas or set specific targets they may provide little background. Some targets are vaguely expressed and do not clearly indicate where the school will focus on improving results and why. Expected benefits or outcomes from the targets are not always clearly stated. There is often little evidence that the chosen targets are the most needed or relevant for the school
- findings from evaluations contain little information as to what fundamental changes in local arrangements, processes or operations need to occur as a result.

#### Some examples of relatively vague targets

To increase student understanding in environment education using the quality teaching dimension of significance.

Explicit teaching with the continued development of a whole school tracking process.

Appropriate teaching strategies to enhance student knowledge evidenced in class and stage programming.

### 2.3 Focusing on results and outcomes

We expected that the annual report would provide a clear discussion on what the school planned to achieve, did achieve, and plans to achieve in the future.

#### Planned achievements

We found that:

- school annual reports do provide some explanations of what the school achieved, as measured against standards or benchmarks
- schools report on some specific areas selected for evaluation under the required headings of educational and management practice, curriculum, student performance, plus optional headings
- the Department has developed or acquired useful evaluation instruments such as *School Map* and *Quality of School Life Survey*.

#### Reporting results

However, we also found that:

- schools tend to report results and outcomes selectively, or report average results to focus on the more positive aspects of the school's year or result in misinterpretation of low performance. It is not always clear that some of the reported results are due to the efforts of the school
- where schools have selected a specific area for evaluation, they may report the genuine findings of the evaluation, but over-emphasise the positives and understate the performance issues needing attention.

### **Case study: Poor linkage between evaluation findings and future directions**

The most common issue evident in the evaluation is the lack of continuity between the findings and future directions.

It also appears that some schools chose an area for evaluation which appears to have been functioning well without any major issues, as the findings are nothing but a statement of achievements and strengths.

An example of an evaluation appears below.

#### *Background*

*In 2001 the school's self-evaluation team evaluated Learning. This evaluation was a logical sequence to last year's evaluation of Teaching Practice. SchoolMap surveys of students, parents and staff were undertaken. In addition a Year 12 exit poll was conducted.*

#### *Findings*

*Although parents and students recognise the ongoing commitment of staff to their professional development they indicated that the learning needs of all students could be better addressed. A significant percentage (51%) of students surveyed, indicated that they either sometimes or rarely liked learning.*

The findings were essentially that student learning could be addressed better and that half the students did not like learning. There was no breakdown by grades, gender, ethnicity, etc and there was no attempt to find what subject areas were of most concern.

The actions that the school intended to take in response to this evaluation were similarly superficial. They were going to make a video of good teaching and use one training session, and then -

*encourage teachers to improve their students' learning outcomes by attending in-service courses.*

There was no response planned for teachers who would not take up the encouragement to further improve.

The school set a target 'To increase the percentage of staff attending training courses from 65% to 75%.' *In the following year it reported 'This was achieved, with 77% of staff attending courses in 2002, by encouraging staff to improve their teaching by attending training courses'.*

Readers are given no idea of whether or not teachers actually improved their teaching as a result of their attendance at the training courses. Nor is it apparent whether the teachers who did attend training programs were those who needed to attend training programs. It is also not clear whether the students' attitudes to learning had improved from the previous year. These are obviously difficult areas and must be considered realistically. The issue for attention in our view is to give more consideration to outcomes, instead of simply reporting inputs and activity.

## 2.4 Discussing results against expectations

### Information available to schools

We expected that school targets set would provide measures against which readers can assess the success or otherwise of the school's performance. The report should clearly indicate whether or not the school successfully achieved its desired outcomes.

We found that:

- some schools indicate whether or not the students' results were consistent with previous years or expectations
- the Department provides schools with an extensive range of 'value-added' indicators that illustrate students' academic progress over time
- schools also receive a range of other data based on external test results at key points and in key areas allowing schools to interpret their students' performance more accurately
- the Board of Studies has a package of information available for schools regarding their performances in the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate.

### Information reported

However, we also found that:

- reporting of student results tends to be selective and expectations are stated vaguely
- schools generally do not include details of why they did not achieve as well as expected
- emphasis is on the use of prose in preference to graphics, so limiting comparisons from one year to the next, with vague statements about performance rather than the quantitative data which could have been reported
- policies, legislation and regulations prohibit the release of comparative information on the effectiveness and performance of schools in terms of student achievement
- where schools have focused on a specific area for evaluation, reports may explain how the evaluation findings verify expectations, but not where expectations were not met.

### **Case study: Lack of explanation of expectations and mandatory requirements**

In many of the reports there are references to the school's work in certain curriculum areas. For example, schools report on their work in Aboriginal Education, Multicultural Education, Sport, Creative and Performing Arts, Student Welfare and others. Throughout the reports however, readers are rarely given any indication of what is expected of the school in terms of mandatory syllabus or curriculum requirements.

For example all students in every school are required to undertake specific activities related to Aboriginal education. Similarly, the Multicultural Curriculum is designed to have students develop tolerance, understanding and appreciation of other cultures and their place in contemporary Australian society.

For the most part, reports list a series of activities that have been undertaken throughout the year. Many of these are couched in vague terms or jargon that do not provide answers to key questions such as:

- are students developing tolerance and appreciation?
- is the school implementing the syllabus or curriculum as it was intended?
- are expectations being met in terms of student behaviour or attitudes and values towards Aboriginal and/or ethnic students and community members?

Some examples of the kind of input based reporting with little accountability:

#### **Aboriginal Education**

*Six Aboriginal students were enrolled in 2002. The focus of Aboriginal education was the teaching of Aboriginal history and culture, particularly in visual arts, some English literature and stage 5 History. The Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness committee planned two major activities relating to Aboriginal identity but circumstances intervened so that both had to be postponed to 2003.*

#### **Multicultural Education**

1. *Students are encouraged to recognise that Australia is a multicultural nation.*
2. *Multicultural perspectives are integrated into class units of work. Students are taught the concept of Australia as a culturally diverse society. There were no students at the School from a non-English-speaking background who required support from a specialist teacher in 2002.*

### Case study: Use of statistics that confuse readers

Where statistical evidence is used, it is often done in a way that confuses the reader. Sometimes it is difficult to clearly understand what the school is trying to say in reporting student performance and achievement.

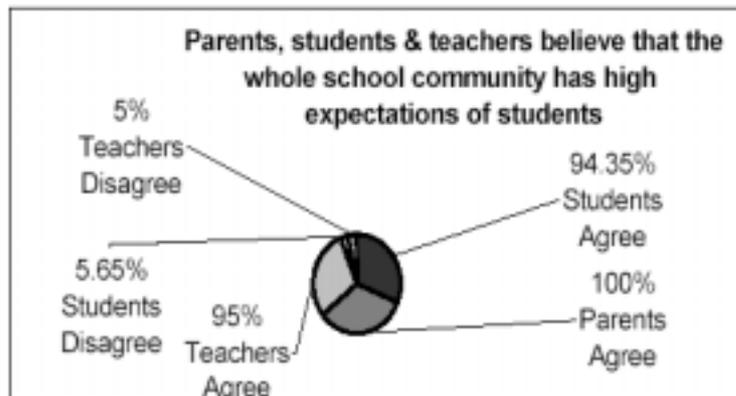
Some examples of this practice are shown below.

*How did our students perform in the BST numeracy test compared with the State?*

- *52% of Year 3 students were in Bands 3 and 4 compared with 56% across the state. However, only 7% were in Band 5 compared with 18% across the state*
- *32% of Year 3 boys were in the top two bands compared with 45% of boys across the state*
- *50% of Year 3 girls were in Bands 1 and 2 compared with 26% of girls across the state*
- *in year 5 although just below the state average, there was a marked improvement*
- *in Year 5 boys were at state average and showing growth*
- *32% of Year 5 boys were in Band 6 compared to 25% in the state*
- *79% of Year 5 girls were in Bands 3, 4, and 5.*

This example demonstrates the difficulty faced by schools in conforming with the protocols for reporting.

On occasions schools try to use graphic images to assist understanding, but may further confuse the reader. For example:



## 2.5 Being complete and informative

We expected that for schools:

- published performance indicators would be both qualitative and quantitative and be relevant and appropriate
- performance reporting would include performance against targets identified in the last annual report
- performance reporting would also include honest coverage of both successes and setbacks, as well as trend data and a discussion and analysis of changes over time.

### Template and reporting advice

We found that:

- the Department provides schools with a reporting template and a support document to facilitate preparation of the reports
- the Department advises schools that the report should provide a balanced account of the school's major achievements as well as areas for development
- the Department has recently reaffirmed its advice to schools that the intended audience for the report is the local school community and that educational jargon and acronyms should be minimised.

### Extent of information reported

However, we also found that:

- school annual reports seldom provide a complete and informative picture of achievements in key learning areas. Schools tend to report student achievement selectively, focusing on the most positive results, with relatively unbalanced reporting across a range of areas
- school annual reports offer little, if any, information on teacher credentials, secondary class sizes, actual parental involvement and participation and whether the schools are properly resourced for staff, special needs, facilities and equipment
- school annual reports offer little, if any, comment on aspects such as behaviour management (although anti-bullying programs and anti-drug programs were mentioned)
- schools frequently use educational jargon when reporting
- although parent and community involvement is encouraged few school annual reports explain parents' actual involvement in decision-making in relation to preparation of the annual report, school evaluations, relevant policies, school planning, financial priorities and building facilities.

**Case study: Providing incomplete information that may be misinterpreted**

Some schools report incomplete information that may be misinterpreted in reaching an understanding of the true picture about what is happening in the school. This may occur in a number of ways.

Schools may provide information to parents that does not give sufficiently full insights into the provision of services. For example one school reported that they have, '*More computers now available.*' Parents might believe that the students in the school are being well serviced in the area of technology. This may be true. However, it is impossible to judge as the school report does not contain information from the Department about:

- appropriate benchmarks for computer availability
- the desired and actual ratios of students to computers
- the location of the computers
- what access individual students are able to gain to the computers.

As a result of this kind of reporting, parents are not able to make judgments about the efficiency and effectiveness of computer education programs or resources in the School.

Another example may be misleading. It joins together separate courses and attempts to amalgamate the result across one set of statistics.

*In English XXX High School offered English (standard), Advanced English and English (extensions 1 and 2).*

- *72.2% achieved results in bands 3, 4 and 5 compared to 71.6% statewide. No student achieved a Band 6 result in the State*
- *the class average was just above the state average*
- *other English classes had very small candidatures.*

### Case study: Minimal disclosure of information

Significant numbers of reports in our sample showed that schools often do not disclose all the information available to them. This appeared particularly evident in the section on student performance.

Most notable was where schools reported their value-added data in a way that may confuse parents, or where they did not report it at all.

A school that has a sincere desire to inform its parent body about student performance will openly and honestly disclose all information.

For example:

*In mathematics:*

- *15% of students achieved Bands 1 and 2 compared with 15% statewide*
- *67% of students achieved Bands 3 and 4 compared with 59% statewide*
- *17% of students achieved Bands 5 and 6 compared with 26% statewide.*

The school will also report the value added results in a meaningful way.

*In mathematics:*

- *overall the progress of students is generally lower than that achieved by similar students statewide*
- *the progress of middle and high performing students (Bands 3, 4, 5, and 6) is poor by comparison with similar students statewide.*

In this example the reader is immediately informed that students, even those who have performed quite well compared with the state wide figures, have not maintained their relative level of performance compared with their earlier results. This provides the school with necessary information to be able to investigate the teaching of mathematics in Years 7 to 10. This would readily provide a focus for an evaluation to be conducted in the following year.

### **Case study: Parent and caregiver involvement and participation**

In our view there are two aspects involved:

- involvement includes such things as parents attending social functions, helping with classroom or school activities, fund-raising, supporting grounds maintenance, working in the canteen, and other general support-type activities
- participation involves parents making a genuine contribution to the governance of the school. This may include proposing policy changes, approving budgets, shaping the overall direction of the school, sitting on various committees, determining community use of school facilities or helping to select staff.

Few schools in their annual school reports referred to participation as a concept. Almost all reporting in this area focused on parental involvement and superficial contributions to policy-making.

By way of example:

- *annually the parents of Year 7 students are invited to an informal gathering to meet staff at the beginning of the school year*
- *school sporting carnivals and excursions are being supported by an increased number of parents*
- *formal assemblies also see an increased number of parents in attendance.*

Another example:

- *parents assisted in 19 classes with around 75 volunteers, including a number of senior citizens, being involved each week. In addition, another 55 help in other areas of the school*
- *the school was fortunate in having a number of senior citizens who also supported our literacy programs*
- *the St John's Ambulance Program to Aid Literacy (PAL), was recently introduced with trained tutors assisting students in reading*
- *the P & C continued to provide wonderful financial support for teaching resources*
- *many parents supported the excursions that were part of the educational program. This support, particularly on overnight excursions, was greatly valued.*

### **Case study: Jargon and 'education-speak' in the reports**

School reports continue to provide information to the parents and community in a way that is almost unintelligible.

Some examples are shown below.

*Access to the Internet has been enhanced by the purchase and installation of a dedicated hard drive to the network server to act as a proxy cache. Sadly, this is often negated by the slowness of the line out of the school with many Internet sites timing out before they are accessed.*

*The identified dip in satisfaction/relevance levels, particularly amongst boys in Years 7-9, will be addressed by targeting the middle years and by providing more streamlined transition programs. (See section 3.2 target 1). The peer tutoring program and student advisory period (SAP) are designed to address these concern via improved literacy, numeracy, and organisational skills in the junior school.*

*In the area of educational practice, the pedagogy matrix and teacher survey tool from the Consistent Teacher Judgement (CTJ) project was used to determine the school's position along a continuum of best practice.*

*Classes are, as far as possible, parallel and gender equitable. Release from face to face (RFF) teaching is timetabled in stage blocks to facilitate team planning and collaboration. RFF covers, science, environmental education and research skills.*

## **2.6 Explaining changes over time**

We expected that schools would report performance information consistently from one year to the next. When performance indicators or targets have changed then the change and the reasons for it occurring would be clearly described.

We found that:

- school annual reports will sometimes refer to improved performance since the previous year and make some reference to trends
- school reports will also report progress on targets selected the previous year
- school reports are scheduled to appear in week 1 of first term for primary schools and week 2 of second term for secondary schools (following analysis of School Certificate and Higher School Certificate results).

**Comparison over time**

However, we also found that:

- although school annual reports will sometimes refer to changes, there is otherwise limited comparison over time. Contextual changes that have occurred are often not clear to the reader
- in some years industrial action has disrupted production and prevented completion of school annual reports
- although many targets are ongoing, the strategies and factors impacting on their achievement are not clearly articulated each year
- changes in students' results against specific benchmarks, particularly lower results, may not be explained
- changes in the school's financial position, changing enrolment, changes in staffing arrangements and changing resource allocations are generally not explained.

## **2.7 Providing evidence of value for money and benchmarking**

We expected that in reporting value for money, schools would disclose their costs to achieve outcomes, and benchmark themselves where possible.

**Comparison against benchmarks**

We found that:

- school annual reports in their present form do not enable any comprehensive comparison of achievements against benchmarks or against other schools
- although every school compares its academic performance and attendance against the state average, schools are afforded significant scope to 'pick and choose' indicators of their achievement, thereby allowing them to choose not to report adverse information

**Assuring value for money**

- school annual reports provide very limited information on their resources (the report excludes major areas of expenditure such as salaries, maintenance and capital works). The sources and applications of grants and of funds received from parents are not usually explained. The ways in which the school may have optimised its resources (for example by saving money from its teacher leave budget and using it for training and development) are not explained
- around \$43 million was raised by Parents and Citizens' Associations in NSW in 2003. Parents and Citizens' Associations in some schools are more effective in fundraising than others, but this is not transparent in school annual reports. Some schools are worried that parents or the Department may reduce or stop funding if the contribution figure is published

- some schools have self-evaluation committees or school councils with parent representatives, but in many schools, particularly high schools, detail in the reports about the involvement of parents and community in the evaluation process is scant or non-existent.

In the past, the Department required schools to conduct public meetings to discuss school annual reports. But this requirement has since been abandoned due to low interest from parents and the general public.

**Case study: Blaming the students or lack of resources for shortcomings**

Some schools tend to blame the students or lack of resources in trying to rationalise underperformance.

For example:

*Results in mathematics extension 1 were disappointing. As a result the school will place student subject choices under even greater scrutiny in 2003.*

What this school appears to be saying is that the reasons students have not performed well in Extension 1 Mathematics is because the wrong students chose the course. There was little or no evidence of an attempt to explore other possibilities for the underperformance including such things as:

- continuity of teachers
- capacity of teachers to teach the course
- sick leave or long service leave by the teachers
- students' attendance
- relationships between teachers and students
- student behaviour.

## 2.8 Discussing strategies, risks and external factors

We expected that schools would provide information on factors affecting their ability to achieve objectives. This would include significant external and internal challenges or risks, their likely impacts and their response to these challenges/risks. Schools would also outline the use of performance information in decision making to address shortcomings and improve performance.

We found that:

- there is a requirement for principals to report on any area of significance from the school plan if it has a direct impact on the school and community.

However, we also found that:

- school annual reports may identify the non-English speaking and Aboriginal components of their school populations, but do not usually include discussion of socio-economic and ethnicity challenges that have impacted on the school either negatively or positively
- school annual reports do not generally address contextual factors that may have impinged on achievements, such as a significant staff movement, a building program, or a sudden drop in parental contributions
- school annual reports generally do not identify and discuss risks that may affect the school context, such as the need for parent assistance to achieve certain targets (although this may be addressed in school newsletters).

## 2.9 Scope for improvement

### Concerns of our 1999 Review

Our performance audit in 1999 reviewed the 'School Accountability and Improvement Model', including school annual reports in the context of the model. We found that:

annual school reports would better achieve their purpose if schools reported more extensively and consistently on a common set of indicators covering student learning, school culture and work environment. For example, value-added information is a key feature of the model for which more extensive and consistent reporting would achieve greater accountability to the community for school performance. In addition to mandatory indicators, schools should continue to be allowed flexibility to report additional information of local significance.

**Source:** Audit Office of NSW, Performance Audit Report *The School Accountability and Improvement Model*, 1999 p4.

### Similar weaknesses

Weaknesses in the 1997 school annual reports were that they:

- were not consistent in content between schools, as principals were afforded significant scope to 'pick and choose' indicators, thereby allowing them to opt not to report adverse and/or information about value added
- provided limited emphasis on data showing trends over time
- incorporated information on school finances which was open to misinterpretation
- provided contextual information of limited relevance to the school's performance which duplicated much of the information schools include in other publications.

**Source:** Audit Office of NSW, Performance Audit Report *The School Accountability and Improvement Model*, 1999 p42.

The school improvement targets set in several of the 1997 reports examined were:

- vague and difficult to measure and monitor eg 'review the school's curriculum to ensure the interests, needs and abilities of all students are being met'
- easy to achieve (if not already achieved)
- unrelated to the performance information or the areas for improvement identified in the report.

**Source:** Audit Office of NSW, Performance Audit Report *The School Accountability and Improvement Model*, 1999 p42.

This performance audit, based on a representative sample of the last two available years of school annual reports, indicates that concerns with the quality and potential usefulness of the reports remain. The following table summarises our observations. Whilst there are some clear examples of better practice, most school annual reports offer considerable scope for improvement.

Assessing the information in our sample of school annual reports					
Audit criteria	arguably misleading	no information	vague	clear but limited	comprehensive
Clear and measurable objectives	2%	27%	35%	34%	2%
Results and outcomes	1%	8%	50%	38%	3%
Results against expectations	1%	63%	32%	3%	1%
Complete and informative	3%	6%	52%	36%	3%
Explain change over time	0%	80%	14%	6%	0%
Value for money and benchmarking	0%	76%	24%	0%	0%
Risks, strategies and external factors	1%	77%	15%	6%	1%



### **3. Strengthening accountability**

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### 3.1 Removing conflicting tensions

We found that school annual reports in NSW endeavour to serve multiple purposes in addition to the aim of providing public accountability. In so doing, school annual reports try to satisfy the competing information needs of multiple audiences and multiple objectives.

For example, schools appear to have a fundamental difficulty in disclosing what could be seen as weaknesses when they are intent on promoting themselves in the wider community. As schools are given considerable flexibility to choose what they wish to report, annual reports tend to focus on selected items of good news, despite all the evaluative material they receive from the Department of Education and Training.

This leads to conflicting tensions. A community representative summed up the situation as follows:

The report is targeted at too many audiences. Its purpose is not clear. Is it to be a public relations tool or an accountability exercise?

In our view, the emphasis in school annual reports on public accountability should be strengthened and other aims dealt with by other means.

### 3.2 Strengthening the focus on public accountability

#### Critical element for accountability

The Department intended that school annual reports would form a critical element in the accountability process for schools as:

- the Director-General, in announcing a 1995 Departmental restructure, indicated that annual reports on school performance would replace performance agreements for principals, and that the reports would be based on the results of testing and other processes for the monitoring and reporting of student performance

**Source:** NSW Department of Education and Training, referred to in *School Accountability and Improvement*, memorandum to principals, November 1996.

- the 1997 *School Accountability and Improvement Model* was based on self-evaluation by the school, production of an annual school report, and in-depth school reviews.

**Source:** NSW Department of Education and Training, *School Accountability and Improvement in NSW Public Schools*, 1996.

But we have found that school annual reports in NSW in their present form are not an effective means of holding a school accountable.

**Limited involvement of the school community**

The Department intended that a school self-evaluation committee would drive the evaluating and reporting process. The committee would be representative of the school community, including parents, students, and staff members. However, the self-evaluation committees do not generally function in the pro-active manner envisaged.

The Department could strengthen annual reports by requiring schools to report on the information that parents seek, and include a report from the Parents and Citizens President in their area.

It could also increase the accessibility of school annual reports to the public by putting every school annual report on the Department's website. This measure was part of the Government's 2003 election commitment, but it could not be implemented as it opened the possibility of publication of state-wide comparison data in breach of the 1997 Protocols.

**Reporting content largely optional**

Whilst the format of the school annual report is specified, the content is in large part optional. The Department does not require schools to evaluate all curriculum or management areas either every year or on a cyclical basis.

The method schools choose to monitor progress can vary - for instance schools may conduct an annual review in a public forum, or use operational or curriculum committees.

**Limited opportunity to compare performance**

The legislation and protocols restricting the publication of comparative performance data limit any public assessment of school performance. For instance, the practice of benchmarking is a tool that quickly and efficiently establishes standards for all areas of performance and cost. It can identify improvement opportunities and areas that might otherwise go unnoticed. Better use could be made of the literacy and numeracy standards incorporated in standardised testing.

The criteria the Department uses to evaluate school performance are not clear to the reader of a school annual report, nor are the criteria established to determine the status of schools regarding school improvement and corrective action.

**Limited external review**

There is a degree of independent analysis and validation of the information published by schools in annual school reports by Departmental staff located in District Offices:

- the district chief education officer can provide guidance to the school during the self-evaluation process and validate the analysis of any performance data contained in the report, although this support appears variable
- the district superintendent endorses any targets contained in the report.

However, there are no regular external reviews:

Neither government nor non-government schools are the subject of any regular, independent, external evaluation and reporting such as applies in a number of overseas countries.

**Source:** NSW Department of Education and Training, *Review of Non-Government Schools in NSW: Report 1, 2002* p65.

The systems of other Australian States vary in this respect:

Across the country there is variation in the rigour and extent to which school annual reports are verified and audited. Approximately half the State/Territory systems use external verifiers to assess the validity and accuracy of the information published by schools. Following the recommendation of a State audit report, in Victorian government schools this is undertaken by verifiers who are independent of school and departmental management.

**Source:** Professor Peter Cuttance & Shirley Stokes, *Reporting on Student and School Achievement*, prepared for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000 p28

Other countries have more rigorous systems:

The international trend in education is towards the establishment of more rigorous accountability systems based on external evaluation and the publishing of information on school performance and effectiveness. Such systems generally aim to use performance data to raise education standards through school improvement strategies directed at lifting the quality of teaching and management. They also aim to equip parents to make informed decisions about school choice. In countries such as England, Scotland, the Netherlands and New Zealand, public reporting on school performance is more open and extensive than in Australia.

**Source:** NSW Department of Education and Training, *Review of Non-Government Schools in NSW: Report 1, 2002* p57.

### **New model and framework**

Prior to the 2003 election the Government announced that a new model and framework for monitoring, developing and supporting all schools would be developed during 2003 for implementation from the start of 2004 school year. It was to be a state wide, system-wide approach, focused on educational programs and outcomes. No new model has yet been introduced across government schools, although the Department is developing one.

The Department intends that schools will have:

- an annual maintenance or operational plan to address recurring operational matters
- a more detailed annual school plan to incorporate departmental initiatives, programs with attached funding, annual and strategic targets, priorities for action and indicators of success.

The school planning process would be collaborative, involving staff, students and representatives of key parent/community groups. Whilst school plans have existed in various forms for some years, in recent years there has been no linkage with school annual reports.

In our view the school plan could also incorporate:

- school core beliefs and values
- the professional learning component for staff.

A more rigorous framework for monitoring and reporting the performance of schools could then include:

- annual student performance reporting
- annual reports of progress against the School Management Plan
- results of external review
- results of financial audits.

The Department could strengthen the role of school annual reports in promoting public accountability by:

- introducing a more rigorous framework for monitoring and reporting the performance of schools and concentrating the school annual report on this area
- re-examining the material that schools may report to introduce a degree of school comparison and bench-marking, possibly with more emphasis on value-adding and comparisons between schools in like circumstances
- requiring schools to prepare a School Management Plan, including a professional learning component, and make this publicly available
- linking the school annual report to the School Management Plan to focus on school-specific and systemic needs, targets, resource needs and measures
- placing an outcome requirement for school annual reports on school principals with minimum reporting standards, rather than trying to specify what, when and how the contents should be presented to parents and the community
- including in each school's annual report a report from the Parents and Citizens President in their area

- establishing an accreditation scheme for schools, that could assure an adequate standard of self evaluation and reporting for a *quality endorsed* school
- increasing the accessibility of school annual reports to the public by putting every school annual report on the Department's website
- establishing a means of external review, sufficiently removed from the school to ensure objectivity in reporting.

**Case study: Complementing self-evaluation with external review**

Early in 2004 the UK *Department of Education and Skills* and the *Office for Standards in Education* set out their vision for strengthened school self evaluation and external inspection.

*There is a lot of variation in the effectiveness, regularity and depth with which schools review their work. The time is right to stimulate every school to embed strong self-evaluation in its day-to-day practice.*

The vision includes:

- short, sharp inspections
- conducted at relatively short notice
- at least once every 3 years
- using the school's evidence of self-evaluation as the starting point
- with draft inspection reports to be produced by the end of the week of inspection.

**Source:** UK Department of Education and Skills and the Office for Standards in Education, *A new relationship with schools*, 2004.

### 3.3 Using the School Management Plan

The Department's proposed School Management Plan appears to offer a more effective means of dealing with school improvement efforts. School improvement efforts can only be fully understood in the context of the overall school management plan.

School annual reports outline some of the school's achievements and evaluations over the year and detail targets for the coming year. The selection of areas to evaluate is optional, but should include one area of educational and management practice and one curriculum area.

The information on school evaluations in the annual report:

- draws on a range of internally held information and internal school reviews
- represents only a portion of overall school improvement planning
- can be vaguely expressed and difficult to measure and monitor
- is frequently difficult for the public to understand
- is of less interest to parents, who are more interested in knowing that the Department is ensuring schools and improvement practices are being monitored.

And the Department's proposed School Management Plan should offer a more effective means of managing school resource needs.

There is little evidence that annual school reports are making a difference to resource allocation by the Department.

School annual reports contain relatively little information on resources. The reports can link targets to the school management plan, but such links are generally limited to two or three selected targets.

School annual reports tend naturally to focus on achievements of the past year, not the school's longer-term resource needs.

The absence from the reports of comparative performance information and comparable resource data further diminish the school annual report's usefulness for targeting resource requirements at district and systemic levels.

### **3.4 Using the School Promotion package**

Increased competition between schools has resulted in an increasing expectation that schools act to promote the school, including through participation in open days, parent interviews, production of promotional material and involvement in local community events.

School annual reports provide an opportunity to promote the school and its achievements. Many school principals appear to concentrate on this area as best they can within the annual reporting framework. The report is used like a prospectus by schools to the local community, as parents can use this information to decide the future enrolment of their children.

Independent schools report so much favourable information in high quality documents that government schools may appear to compare poorly by comparison.

The Minister for Education in March 2004 released a School Promotion package designed to help schools make videos and brochures. The aim is to assist schools promote themselves and their achievements and overcome negative perceptions of the school in their community.

The School Promotion package should become the principal means of promoting the school to prospective parents. A more rigorous and objective school annual report could then focus on providing accountability to the school community.

## Appendix

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## About the audit

### Audit objective

The objective of the audit was to examine the adequacy of performance information contained in school annual reports, considering the different purposes they serve, including:

- providing public accountability
- use by the Department for planning and resource allocation
- encouraging school improvement efforts
- informing parents and community members
- promoting the school in the wider community.

### Audit scope and focus

We examined a representative sample of recent School Annual Reports. The sample of 125 schools was selected by the audit team from a list of all government schools in NSW. The sample covered metropolitan, regional and rural communities and reflected the variety of school types and student numbers within the system. It consisted of 47 high schools, 72 public (primary) schools, and 6 other.

It included the last two years of annual reports available from each of the selected schools. Of the 125, 81 (chiefly high schools) had not prepared 2003 Annual Reports (as a result of an industrial ban).

Where weaknesses in reporting were found, we enquired as to what processes were established at the systemic level to rectify such weaknesses. We also examined what guidance the Department provided to schools.

### Audit criteria

The audit criteria were developed from the Audit Office's Better Practice Guide for Annual Reports that requires they:

- report objectives that are clear and measurable
- focus on results and outcomes
- discuss results against expectations
- be complete and informative
- explain changes over time
- provide evidence of value for money and benchmarking
- discuss strategies, risks and external factors.

As these criteria were developed for the reporting of government agencies, their application was slightly modified to suit the purpose of assessing school reports.

- Audit approach** The audit was conducted by:
- engaging the assistance of a recognised consultant in school education, who provided high-level education-specific support to the audit
  - reviewing a selection of school annual reports using the criteria outlined above. This aspect include interviews and targeted surveys of specific personnel associated with the production of the documents including the school community representative, the principal and the chief education officers
  - reviewing relevant Department documents including policies and guidelines
  - discussing with relevant staff in the Department of Education such as a selection of Chief Education Officers, head office staff dealing with annual reports
  - meeting representatives of key stakeholders such as the NSW Teachers Federation, Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of NSW, NSW Primary Principals Association, NSW Secondary Principals Council.
- Acknowledgements** The Audit Office gratefully acknowledges the co-operation and assistance provided by the representatives of the Department of Education and Training, school community, principals and chief education officers associated with our review, and also the assistance of the key stakeholder representatives who greatly assisted our understanding of the issues.
- Cost of the audit** Including printing and all overheads the estimated cost of this audit is \$128,000.



## Performance Audits by the Audit Office of New South Wales

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## Performance Auditing

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### What are performance audits?

Performance audits are reviews designed to determine how efficiently and effectively an agency is carrying out its functions.

Performance audits may review a government program, all or part of a government agency or consider particular issues which affect the whole public sector.

Where appropriate, performance audits make recommendations for improvements relating to those functions.

### Why do we conduct performance audits?

Performance audits provide independent assurance to Parliament and the public that government funds are being spent efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with the law.

They seek to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies and ensure that the community receives value for money from government services.

Performance audits also assist the accountability process by holding agencies accountable for their performance.

### What is the legislative basis for Performance Audits?

The legislative basis for performance audits is contained within the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, Part 3 Division 2A*, (the Act) which differentiates such work from the Office's financial statements audit function.

Performance audits are not entitled to question the merits of policy objectives of the Government.

### Who conducts performance audits?

Performance audits are conducted by specialist performance auditors who are drawn from a wide range of professional disciplines.

### How do we choose our topics?

Topics for performance audits are chosen from a variety of sources including:

- our own research on emerging issues
- suggestions from Parliamentarians, agency Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and members of the public
- complaints about waste of public money
- referrals from Parliament.

Each potential audit topic is considered and evaluated in terms of possible benefits including cost savings, impact and improvements in public administration.

The Audit Office has no jurisdiction over local government and cannot review issues relating to council activities.

If you wish to find out what performance audits are currently in progress just visit our website at [www.audit@nsw.gov.au](http://www.audit@nsw.gov.au).

### How do we conduct performance audits?

Performance audits are conducted in compliance with relevant Australian standards for performance auditing and operate under a quality management system certified under international quality standard ISO 9001.

Our policy is to conduct these audits on a "no surprise" basis.

Operational managers, and where necessary executive officers, are informed of the progress with the audit on a continuous basis.

### **What are the phases in performance auditing?**

Performance audits have three key phases: planning, fieldwork and report writing.

During the planning phase, the audit team will develop audit criteria and define the audit field work.

At the completion of field work an exit interview is held with agency management to discuss all significant matters arising out of the audit. The basis for the exit interview is generally a draft performance audit report.

The exit interview serves to ensure that facts presented in the report are accurate and that recommendations are appropriate. Following the exit interview, a formal draft report is provided to the CEO for comment. The relevant Minister is also provided with a copy of the draft report. The final report, which is tabled in Parliament, includes any comment made by the CEO on the conclusion and the recommendations of the audit.

Depending on the scope of an audit, performance audits can take from several months to a year to complete.

Copies of our performance audit reports can be obtained from our website or by contacting our publications unit.

### **How do we measure an agency's performance?**

During the planning stage of an audit the team develops the audit criteria. These are standards of performance against which an agency is assessed. Criteria may be based on government targets or benchmarks, comparative data, published guidelines, agencies corporate objectives or examples of best practice.

Performance audits look at:

- processes
- results
- costs
- due process and accountability.

### **Do we check to see if recommendations have been implemented?**

Every few years we conduct a follow-up audit of past performance audit reports. These follow-up audits look at the extent to which recommendations have been implemented and whether problems have been addressed.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) may also conduct reviews or hold inquiries into matters raised in performance audit reports. Agencies are also required to report actions taken against each recommendation in their annual report.

To assist agencies to monitor and report on the implementation of recommendations, the Audit Office has prepared a Guide for that purpose. The Guide, *Monitoring and Reporting on Performance Audits Recommendations*, is on the Internet at [www.audit.nsw.gov.au/guides-bp/bpglist.htm](http://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/guides-bp/bpglist.htm)

### **Who audits the auditors?**

Our performance audits are subject to internal and external quality reviews against relevant Australian and international standards. This includes ongoing independent certification of our ISO 9001 quality management system.

The PAC is also responsible for overseeing the activities of the Audit Office and conducts reviews of our operations every three years.

### **Who pays for performance audits?**

No fee is charged for performance audits. Our performance audit services are funded by the NSW Parliament and from internal sources.

### **For further information relating to performance auditing contact:**

Stephen Horne  
Assistant Auditor-General, Performance Audit  
(02) 9275 7278  
email: [stephen.horne@audit.nsw.gov.au](mailto:stephen.horne@audit.nsw.gov.au)

## Performance Audit Reports

No.	Agency or Issue Examined	Title of Performance Audit Report or Publication	Date Tabled in Parliament or Published
64*	Key Performance Indicators	<i>Government-wide Framework Defining and Measuring Performance (Better practice Principles)</i> <i>Legal Aid Commission Case Study</i>	31 August 1999
65	Attorney General's Department	<i>Management of Court Waiting Times</i>	3 September 1999
66	Office of the Protective Commissioner Office of the Public Guardian	<i>Complaints and Review Processes</i>	28 September 1999
67	University of Western Sydney	<i>Administrative Arrangements</i>	17 November 1999
68	NSW Police Service	<i>Enforcement of Street Parking</i>	24 November 1999
69	Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW	<i>Planning for Road Maintenance</i>	1 December 1999
70	NSW Police Service	<i>Staff Rostering, Tasking and Allocation</i>	31 January 2000
71*	Academics' Paid Outside Work	<i>Administrative Procedures</i> <i>Protection of Intellectual Property</i> <i>Minimum Standard Checklists</i> <i>Better Practice Examples</i>	7 February 2000
72	Hospital Emergency Departments	<i>Delivering Services to Patients</i>	15 March 2000
73	Department of Education and Training	<i>Using Computers in Schools for Teaching and Learning</i>	7 June 2000
74	Ageing and Disability Department	<i>Group Homes for people with disabilities in NSW</i>	27 June 2000
75	NSW Department of Transport	<i>Management of Road Passenger Transport Regulation</i>	6 September 2000
76	Judging Performance from Annual Reports	<i>Review of Eight Agencies' Annual Reports</i>	29 November 2000
77*	Reporting Performance	<i>Better Practice Guide</i> <i>A guide to preparing performance information for annual reports</i>	29 November 2000
78	State Rail Authority (CityRail) State Transit Authority	<i>Fare Evasion on Public Transport</i>	6 December 2000
79	TAFE NSW	<i>Review of Administration</i>	6 February 2001
80	Ambulance Service of New South Wales	<i>Readiness to Respond</i>	7 March 2001

No.	Agency or Issue Examined	Title of Performance Audit Report or Publication	Date Tabled in Parliament or Published
81	Department of Housing	<i>Maintenance of Public Housing</i>	11 April 2001
82	Environment Protection Authority	<i>Controlling and Reducing Pollution from Industry</i>	18 April 2001
83	Department of Corrective Services	<i>NSW Correctional Industries</i>	13 June 2001
84	Follow-up of Performance Audits	<i>Police Response to Calls for Assistance</i> <i>The Levying and Collection of Land Tax</i> <i>Coordination of Bushfire Fighting Activities</i>	20 June 2001
85*	Internal Financial Reporting	<i>Internal Financial Reporting including a Better Practice Guide</i>	27 June 2001
86	Follow-up of Performance Audits	<i>The School Accountability and Improvement Model (May 1999)</i> <i>The Management of Court Waiting Times (September 1999)</i>	14 September 2001
87	E-government	<i>Use of the Internet and Related Technologies to Improve Public Sector Performance</i>	19 September 2001
88*	E-government	<i>e-ready, e-steady, e-government: e-government readiness assessment guide</i>	19 September 2001
89	Intellectual Property	<i>Management of Intellectual Property</i>	17 October 2001
90*	Intellectual Property	<i>Better Practice Guide Management of Intellectual Property</i>	17 October 2001
91	University of New South Wales	<i>Educational Testing Centre</i>	21 November 2001
92	Department of Urban Affairs and Planning	<i>Environmental Impact Assessment of Major Projects</i>	28 November 2001
93	Department of Information Technology and Management	<i>Government Property Register</i>	31 January 2002
94	State Debt Recovery Office	<i>Collecting Outstanding Fines and Penalties</i>	17 April 2002
95	Roads and Traffic Authority	<i>Managing Environmental Issues</i>	29 April 2002
96	NSW Agriculture	<i>Managing Animal Disease Emergencies</i>	8 May 2002
97	State Transit Authority Department of Transport	<i>Bus Maintenance and Bus Contracts</i>	29 May 2002
98	Risk Management	<i>Managing Risk in the NSW Public Sector</i>	19 June 2002

<b>No.</b>	<b>Agency or Issue Examined</b>	<b>Title of Performance Audit Report or Publication</b>	<b>Date Tabled in Parliament or Published</b>
99	E-government	<i>User-friendliness of Websites</i>	26 June 2002
100	NSW Police Department of Corrective Services	<i>Managing Sick Leave</i>	23 July 2002
101	Department of Land and Water Conservation	<i>Regulating the Clearing of Native Vegetation</i>	20 August 2002
102	E-government	<i>Electronic Procurement of Hospital Supplies</i>	25 September 2002
103	NSW Public Sector	<i>Outsourcing Information Technology</i>	23 October 2002
104	Ministry for the Arts Department of Community Services Department of Sport and Recreation	<i>Managing Grants</i>	4 December 2002
105	Department of Health Including Area Health Services and Hospitals	<i>Managing Hospital Waste</i>	10 December 2002
106	State Rail Authority	<i>CityRail Passenger Security</i>	12 February 2003
107	NSW Agriculture	<i>Implementing the Ovine Johne's Disease Program</i>	26 February 2003
108	Department of Sustainable Natural Resources Environment Protection Authority	<i>Protecting Our Rivers</i>	7 May 2003
109	Department of Education and Training	<i>Managing Teacher Performance</i>	14 May 2003
110	NSW Police	<i>The Police Assistance Line</i>	5 June 2003
111	E-Government	<i>Roads and Traffic Authority Delivering Services Online</i>	11 June 2003
112	State Rail Authority	<i>The Millennium Train Project</i>	17 June 2003
113	Sydney Water Corporation	<i>Northside Storage Tunnel Project</i>	24 July 2003
114	Ministry of Transport Premier's Department Department of Education and Training	<i>Freedom of Information</i>	28 August 2003
115	NSW Police NSW Roads and Traffic Authority	<i>Dealing with Unlicensed and Unregistered Driving</i>	4 September 2003
116	NSW Department of Health	<i>Waiting Times for Elective Surgery in Public Hospitals</i>	18 September 2003

No.	Agency or Issue Examined	Title of Performance Audit Report or Publication	Date Tabled in Parliament or Published
117	Follow-up of Performance Audits	<i>Complaints and Review Processes (September 1999)</i> <i>Provision of Industry Assistance (December 1998)</i>	24 September 2003
118	Judging Performance from Annual Reports	<i>Review of Eight Agencies' Annual Reports</i>	1 October 2003
119	Asset Disposal	<i>Disposal of Sydney Harbour Foreshore Land</i>	26 November 2003
120	Follow-up of Performance Audits NSW Police	<i>Enforcement of Street Parking (1999)</i> <i>Staff Rostering, Tasking and Allocation (2000)</i>	10 December 2003
121	Department of Health NSW Ambulance Service	<i>Code Red: Hospital Emergency Departments</i>	15 December 2003
122	Follow-up of Performance Audit	<i>Controlling and Reducing Pollution from Industry (April 2001)</i>	12 May 2004
123	National Parks and Wildlife Service	<i>Managing Natural and Cultural Heritage in Parks and Reserves</i>	16 June 2004
124	Fleet Management	<i>Meeting Business Needs</i>	30 June 2004
125	Department of Health NSW Ambulance service	<i>Transporting and Treating Emergency Patients</i>	28 July 2004
126	Department of Education and Training	<i>School Annual Reports</i>	September 2004

\* Better Practice Guides

#### Performance Audits on our website

A list of performance audits tabled or published since March 1997, as well as those currently in progress, can be found on our website [www.audit.nsw.gov.au](http://www.audit.nsw.gov.au)

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For further information please contact:

### The Audit Office of New South Wales

#### Street Address

Level 15  
1 Margaret Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000  
Australia

#### Postal Address

GPO Box 12  
SYDNEY NSW 2001  
Australia

Telephone	(02) 9275 7100
Facsimile	(02) 9275 7200
Internet	<a href="http://www.audit.nsw.gov.au">www.audit.nsw.gov.au</a>
e-mail	<a href="mailto:mail@audit.nsw.gov.au">mail@audit.nsw.gov.au</a>

Office Hours	9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday
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Contact Officer	Stephen Horne Assistant Auditor-General Performance Audit +612 9275 7278
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