

Strategic Audit Plan 2013–16

June 2013

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1. Content of this plan

1.1 Introduction

The Auditor-General, supported by the Queensland Audit Office (QAO), undertakes an independent statutory role for the Parliament, delivering financial and performance auditing services. The results of these audits are reported to the Parliament to provide it with necessary assurance about the reliability of financial reporting by, and the performance of, the public sector.

The *Auditor-General Act 2009* (the Act) establishes this independent audit mandate, which is a cornerstone of public sector accountability.

The Act provides for a strategic audit plan of audits proposed to be conducted over the three subsequent years. The strategic audit plan is to be finalised and published on the QAO website before the end of each financial year.

This is the second time that a three year strategic audit plan has been prepared. The plan gives Parliament, the public sector and the community the opportunity to understand our audit priorities. It provides agencies with both advance notice of audit focus and opportunities to prepare for the audit and engage more constructively with the audit process.

Our aim is to encourage improvement in agency performance and maximise the value our audits deliver.

The plan is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 explains our mandate and audit services.
- Chapter 2 sets out our areas of focus for the financial audit program and our program of proposed performance audits.
- Appendix A contains an overview of performance audit topics by Parliamentary portfolio committee.

1.2 Our mandate

We audit all state and local government public sector entities and any entities that they control. We can exempt entities from annual financial audits by the QAO for periods of up to three years, but only if the audit is small and low risk.

At the request of a Minister or a public sector entity, we may also undertake audits of non-public sector entities, with their agreement.

Our mandate was extended in August 2011 to allow us to audit matters relating to property, money or other assets given to non-public sector entities, including deciding whether they have been applied, economically, efficiently and effectively for the purposes for which they were given. If such an audit is carried out, the Auditor-General must prepare a report to the Legislative Assembly setting out the reasons for conducting the audit and results of the audit.

1.3 Our audit services

1.3.1 Financial audit services to public sector entities

Financial audits provide the users of financial statements of public sector entities with independent assurance that the financial statements are reliable and comply with prescribed requirements. The independent auditor report accompanying the financial statements adds credibility to the financial information reported and allows each entity to discharge its accountability obligation to produce an annual report each year. Financial audits are funded by fees charged to each audited entity.

1.3.2 Direct reporting services to Parliament

The results of all annual financial audits, performance audits and any other audits or investigations we undertake are reported to the Parliament.

1.4 Results of financial audits

We expect to table seven reports on the results of our financial audits during 2013-14:

- results of financial audits of state public sector entities with 30 June 2013 balance dates
 primarily government departments, government owned corporations and statutory bodies
- results of audit of the 2012–13 whole-of-government financial statements
- results of financial audits of water and energy sector entities
- results of financial audits of Hospital and Health Services (HHS)
- results of financial audits of local government sector entities
- results of financial audits of education sector entities (universities and grammar schools)
- results of control assessments from the financial audits of state public sector entities with 30 June 2013 balance dates.

Our reports on the results of financial audits will analyse key governance areas including:

- timeliness of financial reporting
- results and accuracy of financial reporting, including how significant risks and reporting issues have been addressed within sectors
- effectiveness of internal controls
- financial sustainability
- follow up on the implementation of previous audit recommendations.

The production in 2013–14 of additional individual sector reports reflects the importance of services provided and assets managed in those sectors. These sectors are currently undergoing significant review and restructure.

1.5 Results of performance audits

Performance audits determine whether the objectives of public sector entities are being achieved economically, efficiently, effectively and in compliance with all relevant laws.

Performance audits are funded from consolidated revenue, with the annual budget appropriated by the Parliament.

We plan to table ten reports on the results of performance audits:

- right of private practice
- security of traffic management systems
- supply of specialist subject teachers in high schools
- regulation of the mining industry
- ambulance service performance
- contract management: renewal and transition
- major infrastructure projects: tertiary hospitals
- disability access to public transport
- preparedness for the 2018 Commonwealth Games
- early childhood education.

We will also table one follow up report, examining progress achieved by entities in implementing audit recommendations from reports tabled during 2011.

1.6 Our strategic audit planning framework

We balance our performance audit program to provide assurance to Parliament across the full range of public sector accountabilities: from financial regularity, probity, propriety and compliance at one end of the spectrum, through to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

To arrive at our proposed performance audit program, we undertake processes that:

- generate a comprehensive list of potential audit topics—through environmental scanning; from intelligence gathered from external representations, including consultation with relevant government agencies, requests made to us by members of Parliament and the public; and from systemic issues identified during our financial audits
- analyse and rate these topics—in terms of:
 - financial, economic, social and environmental materiality
 - auditability, with clear criteria, evidence easily collected, and can be undertaken in a reasonable timeframe
 - likely impact, relevance and usefulness of findings
 - public interest
- **prioritise topics**—taking into account the time elapsed since any relevant, previous audit coverage; and recent or planned coverage by other independent officers and review agencies such as the Ombudsman and the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

We plan our three-year program of coverage from the list of high priority topics after taking account of our full audit mandate, including whether a topic can be addressed best through a performance audit, through the financial audit program or through other means such as sharing of good practices and benchmark data.

The Auditor-General has the discretion to replace and/or reschedule topics or themes detailed in the strategic audit plan to accommodate changing priorities. Some change to this plan is inevitable, in order to respond to a range of factors which influence the performance of public entities. These factors include emerging issues, changes in the needs of the Parliament, changing government priorities, natural disasters and areas of public interest.

1.7 Performance audits completed in 2012–13

Of the nine performance audits planned for 2012–13, eight were completed, one was deferred to 2013–14 and one audit was brought forward from 2013–14. A new topic was also added in response to a request from the Minister for Health.

In total, 10 performance audits reports were tabled plus one report on the follow up of performance audit recommendations made in 2010.

Figure 1A outlines the specific reports.

Торіс	Report number	Tabled
Follow up of 2010 audit recommendations	Report 2 : 2012–13	October 2012
Tourism industry growth and development	Report 3 : 2012–13	November 2012
Queensland Health—eHealth Program	Report 4 : 2012-13	November 2012
Implementing the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness in Queensland	Report 6 : 2012–13	February 2013
Online service delivery	Report 8 : 2012-13	March 2013
Fraud risk management	Report 9 : 2012-13	March 2013
Community Benefit Funds: Grant management	Report 12 : 2012–13	May 2013
Drink Safe Precincts trial	Report 13 : 2012-13	May 2013
	Brought forward from 2013–14	
Maintenance of water infrastructure assets	Report 14 : 2012–13	June 2013
Enforcement and collection of parking infringement fines	Report 15 : 2012–13	Scheduled for late June 2013
Management of abandoned mines	Re-scoped to Regulation of the mining industry	Deferred to 2013–14

Figure1A 2012–13 completed performance audits

Report No. 6 : 2012 Implementing the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness in Queensland was undertaken concurrently with six other Australian audit offices. This audit, and Report 12 : 2012–13 Community Benefit Funds—Grant management, examined the use of public funds by non-public sector entities.

2. Proposed audit program

2.1 Introduction

This section sets out our program of proposed audit coverage for the next three years, as required by the Act. It deals first with our financial audit services, which have, as their primary focus, financial regularity, compliance, probity and propriety.

We then outline our performance audit services, where focus extends to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

2.2 Financial audit focus 2013–16

Each year we provide around 570 audit opinions on the financial statements of public sector entities. We undertake these audits in accordance with the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards*—September 2012 that incorporate the Australian auditing standards. These require us to analyse each entity's internal control structure and to assess the risks associated with their financial reports. We design our audit procedures to address these risks.

We do not examine or test each area of control in the same depth, or to the same degree, each year. Some areas we test annually while we rotate our coverage for others. The extent of examination and testing is determined annually by our assessment of the associated risk.

Where we rotate coverage of controls, we coordinate our efforts within or across sectors. This allows us to identify systemic issues that may require a whole-of-government or sector wide response.

The public sector has high standards of accountability in relation to the probity and propriety of its activities, as well as an expectation that it will minimise waste and misuse of public resources. Our financial audits also encompass consideration of these matters. Where we identify significant risks in this regard, we design additional audit procedures to ascertain whether these risks have materialised.

2.2.1 Area of financial audit emphasis planned for 2013–14

Having regard to the previous audit focus information, as part of our financial audits, we propose to undertake in-depth reviews of the following areas during 2013–14.

Internal control element	Area of emphasis	Objective	Sector
Control environment			
Information system access and security	Wireless security	Assess the level of protection for the network perimeter against unauthorised access and ensure that all access points are managed using enterprise management tools.	Local government and utility providers
Accountability and responsibility	Financial delegation authorities	Review the assignment and acquittal of delegated financial authority and how these delegations are managed.	Departments, statutory bodies, universities and local government
Financial statement component	Area of emphasis	Objective	Sector
Income and expenditure			
Fees and charges	Setting of fees and charges	Assess compliance with Financial and Performance Management Standard which requires departments and statutory bodies to establish revenue management systems and a process for determining charges for goods and services provided.	Departments and statutory bodies
Supplies and services	Procurement practices	Assess compliance with State Procurement Policy with particular emphasis on procurement plans and preferred supplier arrangements.	Universities
Assets and liabilities			
Receivables	Debt recovery and write off of bad debts	 Assess adequacy of processes and procedures over: recovery of debts provisioning methodology write off approvals. 	Departments
Asset valuations	Scope of valuation and adequacy of assessment of the expert's	Assess adequacy of instructions to valuers and the assessment of results of reported valuation.	Local government

Figure 2A 2013–14 planned areas of emphasis

report

2.2.2 Area of financial audit emphasis proposed for 2014–16

Details of area of emphasis audits planned for 2014–16 are presented in Figures 2B (2014–15) and Figure 2C (2015–16).

Internal control element	Area of emphasis	Objective	Sector
Control environment			
Business continuity controls	IT disaster recovery	Assess whether IT disaster recovery plans are in place, up to date, and tested to establish their efficacy in the event of a significant business disruption.	Departments and statutory bodies
Risk management	Risk assessment	Assess the relevance and appropriateness of risk assessments.	Departments and statutory bodies
Financial statement component	Area of emphasis	Objective	Sector
Income and expenditure			
Supplies and services	Travel expenditure	Assess compliance with policies and procedures to manage travel expenditure.	Local government
Assets and liabilities			
Property, plant and equipment	Impairment of assets	Assess the quality of the documentation and evaluation process for impairment indicators.	Departments, statutory bodies and local
		Determine if there is adequate integration of impairment assessment with strategic asset management	government

Figure 2B 2014–15 planned areas of emphasis

Figure 2C 2015–16 planned areas of emphasis

Internal control element	Area of emphasis	Objective	Sector
Control environment			
Expenditure	Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)	Assess the response to developments and emerging risks in this area.	Departments and statutory bodies
	processing	Assess the response to previously raised issues.	
Financial statement component	Area of emphasis	Objective	Sector
Income and expenditure			
Payroll / employee entitlements	Management of employee leave liability	Assess monitoring and management of employee leave liabilities in accordance with policy.	Departments and statutory bodies
Assets and liabilities			
Cash	Unclaimed monies	Assess the existence and accuracy of reported aged reconciling items and unclaimed monies to ensure compliance with Queensland Treasury's policy on remittance of unclaimed money to the Public Trustee.	Departments and statutory bodies
Property, plant and equipment	Portable and attractive items	Assess compliance with Queensland Treasury's non-current asset policies for the Queensland public sector that requires a register of portable and attractive items is maintained by agencies to control physically such assets that are susceptible to theft or loss.	Departments and statutory bodies

2.3 Performance audit focus 2013–16

Performance audits report directly on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of government programs, services, functions or activities. They may be undertaken in a single entity, or across a number of entities.

Where considered relevant, a performance audit may include, as part of its scope, a review of performance management systems.

2.3.1 Performance audits planned for 2013–14

The performance audits to be completed and tabled during 2013–14 are summarised in Figure 2D.

Торіс	Parliamentary committee	Target tabling 2013–14
Right of private practice	Health and Community Services	1st quarter
arrangements	Audit requested by Minister of Health	
Security of traffic management systems	Transport, Housing and Local Government	1st quarter
Supply of specialist subject area teachers in high schools	Education and Innovation	2nd quarter
Contract management: renewal and transition	Finance and Administration	2nd quarter
Regulation of the mining industry	Agriculture, Resources and Environment	2nd quarter
Ambulance service performance	Legal Affairs and Community Safety	3rd quarter
Major infrastructure projects: tertiary hospitals	Health and Community Services	3rd quarter
Disability access to transport	Transport, Housing and Local Government Health and Community Services	3rd quarter
Preparedness for 2018 Commonwealth Games	State Development, Infrastructure and Industry	4th quarter
Early childhood education	Education and Innovation	4th quarter

Figure 2D 2013–14 planned performance audits

Once a performance audit has commenced, information can be found on our website, www.qao.qld.gov.au, under *Audits in progress*.

Right of private practice arrangements

Medical practitioners (both specialists and non-specialists) employed by Queensland Health in hospital and health services participate in private practice arrangements. This includes practitioners employed in public hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, community clinics and other health facilities. The private practice arrangements form part of the overall employment package for both specialist and non-specialist medical staff.

The objective of this audit is to determine whether the right of private practice arrangements in the public health system are achieving their intended public health outcomes in a financially sustainable manner.

The audit will address the objective through the following sub-objectives:

- the intended health and financial benefits of the scheme are being realised
- the scheme is being administered efficiently
- practitioners are participating in the scheme with probity and propriety and in full compliance with their contractual conditions.

Security of traffic management systems

Critical infrastructure used to deliver traffic management services depends on the operation of computer-based systems. If these systems are not well secured, unauthorised individuals and organisations could exploit weaknesses to disrupt or disable the provision of traffic management services.

In Brisbane, the Department of Transport and Main Roads is responsible for traffic management on state-controlled roads, while Brisbane City Council is responsible for council-controlled roads. In 2008, an alliance between both organisations was formed to establish the Brisbane Metropolitan Traffic Management Centre to control Brisbane's 1 400-plus sites centrally with traffic lights.

The audit will examine whether systems used by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Brisbane City Council to operate and manage traffic control infrastructure are secure and cost effective—in particular, to examine:

- the effectiveness of security controls to prevent, detect and respond to security breaches
- the effectiveness of business continuity management and established emergency response capability
- the cost effectiveness of systems used to deliver traffic management services for roads controlled by the state and council.

Supply of specialist subject area teachers in high schools

Students achieve better results when teachers have strong pedagogical and content knowledge of the subject area. Sometimes teachers teach subjects out of their field of expertise, due to shortages in some subject areas in specific geographic locations.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment has identified current areas of demand for teachers in specialist subjects in specific geographic locations of chemistry; home economics; industrial technology and design; junior secondary language studies, especially Japanese; mathematics B and C; physics; senior English; and special education.

The audit will examine how effectively the department uses secondary school specialist subject teachers to maximise student academic outcomes—in particular:

• the department's efforts to attract and retain sufficient secondary specialist subject teachers to meet demand

• the placement of secondary school specialist subject teachers to maximise student outcomes.

Regulation of the mining industry

Mining is one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy, and the mining and exploration sectors now dominate private capital investment in Queensland.

However, past generations of mining and exploration have left a legacy: the 2007 State of the Environment Report recorded 15 000 abandoned mine sites in Queensland.

Financial assurances are required from mining projects to cover the rehabilitation liability should a mining leaseholder fail to undertake rehabilitation. The current financial assurance system has resulted in a gap in the financial assurances held by government and the potential liability should a miner default.

The audit will examine whether Queensland's environment is protected and well managed during exploration and mining, including:

- the regulation and oversight of exploration and mining activities
- compliance with conditions placed on permits and leases
- adequacy of assurances and deposits to rehabilitate mine sites.

Ambulance service performance

The Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) has the largest per capita workforce, the highest expenditure and highest incident rate for response of any jurisdiction in Australia. It has the third highest number of ambulance stations and locations (after New South Wales and Western Australia).

While its response times outperform other jurisdictions, these response times provide no information on how long it takes to transport a patient to definitive care or on quality of patient care.

A government review of QAS was tabled in Parliament in December 2007. Many of its recommendations were for improvements to demand management, workforce management and (in conjunction with Queensland Health) on patient flow and data collection and reporting.

This audit will examine whether the QAS is delivering its services efficiently and effectively.

Contract management: renewal and transition

The state spends about \$6 billion annually on goods and services. The State Procurement Policy is the overarching policy for government procurement. Public sector entities should manage their contracts to ensure negotiated contract benefits are realised. Supplier performance is one important consideration in this regard.

Deciding whether a contract should be renewed, or terminated and the service retendered, requires sound contract administration and consideration of the likely market conditions at the end of the contract term.

This audit will examine whether government agencies demonstrably achieve value for money from their existing multi-year contracts, and in their decisions to renew or retender their contracts—in particular, to examine:

- the rigour of monitoring and evaluation of current supplier performance against contractually agreed standards
- the adequacy of planning and preparation for contract termination or succession.

Major infrastructure projects: tertiary hospitals

Hospitals are a fundamental part of the delivery of health services to the community. Major capital projects are underway and in various stages of completion for three hospitals: the Gold Coast University Hospital; the Queensland Children's Hospital; and the Sunshine Coast University Hospital - Queensland's first public hospital constructed through a public-private partnership (PPP).

Capital works projects represent a major investment and financial risk for the state. Total investment for each hospital is between \$1.5 to 1.8 billion.

The audit will examine the adequacy of the planning, procurement and management of the projects, including:

- planning—service planning; options analysis; and business cases
- procurement—the procurement strategy; the probity and propriety of procurement; and tender processes and contractual arrangements
- management—status of the projects as on track in terms of planned time, cost and quality
- benefits realisation—cost benefit analysis and ability of projects to deliver their intended benefits.

Disability access to public transport

In 2009, there were 344 000 people in Queensland with a disability. Poor access to public transport for people with a disability can contribute to their under-representation in employment, education and over-representation in health statistics.

The Commonwealth's *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (the disability standards) require states to upgrade public transport progressively to comply fully with the standards by 2032 and meet intermediate milestones in 2007, 2012, 2017 and 2022.

The Department of Main Roads and Transport sets targets, to be achieved by December 2012, for access to public transport in its *Disability Action Plan 2007*.

The audit will examine whether access to public transport has improved for people with a disability—in particular, to examine the actions in the department's *Disability Action Plan 2007* as:

- well planned, coordinated and prioritised
- implemented and monitored
- evaluated and amended to improve performance.

Preparedness for the 2018 Commonwealth Games

With an approved total expenditure budget of \$2.4 billion, the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games are expected to generate up to \$2 billion in economic benefit, with up to 30 000 full time equivalent jobs created over five years.

There is a need for strong governance and delivery structures, given the multiplicity of organisations and groups involved in the Games and to meet the challenge of delivering the Games against an immovable deadline.

Potentially the first of a series of audits, the audit will provide assurance at the planning stage of the Games on:

- governance—effective oversight and clear evidenced-based decision making
- risk management—identification and treatment of emerging risks
- program management—progress to date and performance reporting and monitoring.

Early childhood education

The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (the Agreement) aims to achieve universal access to early childhood education. The objectives include:

- by 2013, every child will have access to a preschool program in the 12 months prior to full time schooling
- the preschool program is to be delivered by a four-year, university-qualified early childhood teacher, in accordance with a national early years learning framework, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year
- the program will be accessible across a diversity of settings, in a form that meets the needs of parents and in a manner that ensures cost does not present a barrier to access.

Queensland is implementing a number of strategies to meet its obligations. The strategies include a kindergarten funding scheme for early childhood education and care services, the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme, which includes additional subsidies for services in socio-economically disadvantaged and remote areas and targeted support for low income families.

The audit will examine the delivery of universal access to early childhood education and achievement against the obligations and targets under the Agreement—in particular to examine that:

- strategies are being implemented as intended
- access has improved, is equitable and meets needs.

2.4 Proposed performance audit themes for 2014–15

Performance audit reports to be tabled in the 2014–15 period will be drawn from among the audit themes listed in Figure 2E.

2014-15 proposed addit memes			
Торіс	Parliamentary committee		
Reef water quality protection	Agriculture, Resources and Environment		
Vocational and educational training outcomes	Education and Innovation		
Maintenance of public schools			
WorkCover claims management	Finance and Administration		
Protective security services			
Service delivery by Hospital and Health Services	Health and Community Services		
Security of sensitive information			
Management of chronic disease			
Bushfire preparedness	Legal Affairs and Community Safety		
Maintaining Queensland's roads	Transport, Housing and Local		
Regulating rail safety	Government		
Road safety—traffic cameras			
Forecasting long-term sustainability in local government			

Figure 2E 2014–15 proposed audit themes

2.5 Proposed performance audit themes for 2015–16

Performance audit reports to be tabled in the 2015–16 period will be drawn from among the audit themes listed in Figure 2F.

2013-10 propos	ed addit themes
Торіс	Parliamentary committee
Agriculture science research and development programs	Agriculture, Resources and Environment
Biomedical waste	
Digital education revolution	Education and Innovation
Cloud computing	
Reliability of the budget process	Finance and Administration
Forensic services	Health and Community Services
Dental care services	
Management of prison services	Legal Affairs and Community Safety
2018 Commonwealth Games - progress	State Development, Infrastructure and Industry
Major roads projects	Transport, Housing and Local Government
Road safety—school zones	
Road safety—heavy freight vehicles	
Public and community housing	
Fraud management in local government	

Figure 2F 2015–16 proposed audit themes

2.6 Follow up of prior audits

Figure 2G lists reports to Parliament tabled in 2011 and subject to follow up in 2013–14.

In addition to verifying whether the progress made has addressed the issues raised in the original audit, we will also examine relevant performance information to assess the action resulting from the audits and improvements to efficiency and effectiveness.

Reports to be followed up in 2013–14Report numberTitle of reportReport No. 1 for 2011Management of offenders subject to
supervision in the communityReport No. 9 for 2011Acquisition and public access to the Museum,
Art Gallery and Library collectionsReport No. 10 for 2011Regulating waste: protecting the environment

Figure 2G Reports to be followed up in 2013–14

Appendix

Performance audit program 2013–16: by Parliamentary committee

Parliamentary committee	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
Agriculture, Resources and Environment	Regulation of the mining industry	Reef water quality protection	Agriculture science research and development programs
			Biomedical waste
Education and Innovation	Supply of specialist subject area teachers in high schools	Vocational and educational training outcomes Maintenance of	Digital education revolution
	Early childhood education	public schools	Cloud computing
Finance and Administration	Contract management: renewal and transition	WorkCover claims management Protective security services	Reliability of the budget process
Health and Community Services	Disability access to public transport	Service delivery by Hospital and Health Services	Forensic services Dental care services
	Major infrastructure projects: tertiary hospitals	Security of sensitive information	
	Right of private practice arrangements	Management of chronic disease	
Legal Affairs and Community Safety	Ambulance response service performance	Bushfire preparedness	Management of prison services
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry	Preparedness for 2018 Commonwealth Games		2018 Commonwealth Games—progress
Transport, Housing and Local Government	Security of traffic management systems	Maintaining Queensland's roads	Major roads projects Road safety—school
		Regulating rail safety	zones
		Road safety—traffic cameras	Road safety—heavy freight vehicles
		Forecasting long term sustainability in local	Public and community housing
		government	Fraud management in local government