

**Submission  
No 2**

**A FRAMEWORK FOR PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND DRIVING  
WELLBEING OUTCOMES IN NSW**

**Organisation:** Auditor-General of New South Wales

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Dear Mr Li

## **Inquiry into a framework for performance reporting and driving wellbeing outcomes in NSW**

Thank you for inviting me to make a submission to the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into a framework for performance reporting and driving wellbeing outcomes in NSW.

It is important that governments are transparent to the community about the outcomes being achieved through investment in programs and service delivery, and I welcome the Committee's examination of potential frameworks that would enable this.

We note the NSW Government's consultation paper on the development of a Performance and Wellbeing Framework which aims to develop a consistent, whole-of-government framework to measure and monitor performance and wellbeing outcomes for the citizens of NSW. We welcome the consideration of a First Nations perspective in the development of this framework.

The Audit Office of NSW has completed several audits that made findings and recommendations about measuring and reporting on the performance of NSW government services. These insights would be relevant to the Committee's focus because they demonstrate potential risks and gaps that should be addressed in any formal framework.

Overall, our audits have identified low maturity in the NSW Government sector in genuine reporting on outcomes. We have found that agencies either do not routinely collect performance information, or do so in an ad-hoc way, and that the quality of information they do collect is often insufficient to allow for a meaningful understanding of performance. These issues would need to be addressed before any effective framework could be established.

A key gap, and common performance audit finding, is that audited agencies were not collecting sufficient information to allow them to understand the quality of services or the experiences and outcomes for the people using their services. The following audits demonstrate this:

- *Oversight of the child protection system (2024)* found that the Department of Communities and Justice lacked data about the wellbeing of children in out of home care and the outcomes of care provided to them. This is in the context of a \$1.9b per annum investment in providing these services. We note that the NSW Ombudsman made some similar findings in its *Protecting children at risk report* published in July 2024.
- *Managing the affairs of people under financial management and/or guardianship orders (2023)* found that the NSW Trustee and Guardian did not track its performance with respect to service quality or the experiences and outcomes of its financial management or public guardianship clients.
- *Responses to homelessness (2021)* found the Department of Communities and Justice did not know how many people experiencing street homelessness who were provided temporary accommodation during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic had returned to homelessness.

Some performance audits found that audited agencies had collected performance information about their activities but were not routinely assessing the outcomes of these activities:

- *Ambulance services in regional New South Wales (2024)* found that NSW Ambulance and the Ministry of Health collected activity data on ambulance services in regional New South Wales to monitor performance in areas such as timeliness of responses. However, NSW Ambulance had limited data on the health outcomes for its patients because its electronic medical record system does not integrate or communicate with other NSW Health systems.
- *Effectiveness of SafeWork NSW in exercising its compliance functions (2024)* found that the performance information that SafeWork NSW reports is activity-based rather than measuring outcomes and does not shed light on whether it is delivering its statutory functions effectively, including whether its activities reduce or eliminate workplace risks to health, safety and welfare.

Other performance audits found that audited agencies had not assessed or reported on the outcomes of major programs:

- *Regional Digital Connectivity Program (2024)* found that the department of Regional NSW was not monitoring progress against outcomes, limiting its ability to demonstrate that the program was achieving its purpose.
- *Regional road safety (2023)* found that Transport for NSW had implemented measures to reduce road trauma across the state but had not assessed the effectiveness of these initiatives in reducing road trauma in regional New South Wales.
- *Regional, rural and remote education (2023)* found that there was no clear performance information to monitor initiatives linked to the Department of Education's strategy for regional and remote education and that the Department did not report publicly on its actions or outcomes.
- *Wellbeing of secondary school students (2019)* found the Department of Education had implemented a range of programs aimed at supporting student wellbeing but had not measured or reported on the outcomes of this work, making it difficult to assess the Department's progress in improving student wellbeing.
- *Progress and measurement of the Premier's priorities (2018)* found that the Premier's Implementation Unit used a systematic approach to measuring and reporting progress towards the Premier's Priorities performance targets, but public reporting needed to improve.

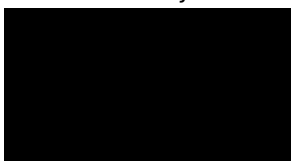
The performance audit reports listed above made a range of recommendations relating to improving performance measurement and reporting. These recommendations covered the following areas:

- Agencies should develop performance management frameworks that capture reliable information on spending, activities and outcomes achieved.
- Agencies should implement mechanisms to capture information about the effectiveness and quality of its services from people using these services.
- Agencies should report more data publicly to improve transparency and accountability.

Finally, I would observe that the quality of financial and performance information, performance measurement and data collection may be improved by providing my office with a formal role to independently review the NSW Budget. This would be consistent with the Public Accounts Committee's 2022 recommendation to the New South Wales Government - contained in the [Quadrennial Review of the Audit Office of New South Wales report](#) - that the Audit Office be provided with this role.

Thank you again for the invitation to make a submission to the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like further information about my reports to Parliament, or to discuss my submission.

Yours sincerely



Bola Oyetunji  
Auditor-General for New South Wales