
Government Responses to the Recommendations of

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE'S

Report on the 2024–25 Financial and Performance Outcomes

Pursuant to Section 36 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, this paper provides a response to the recommendations contained in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's (PAEC) Report on the 2024–25 Financial and Performance Outcomes.

Guide for readers - Following is the explanation of the format of this paper.

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PAEC recommendation	Response	Action taken to date and commitment to further action

Column 1: Contains PAEC's recommendations as published in its Report on the 2024–25 Financial and Performance Outcomes.

Column 2: Indicates the Government's response to each recommendation: 'Support', 'Support-in-Principle', 'Not Support', or 'Under Review'.

Column 3: Provides an explanation of the Government's position on the recommendation, indicates the actions that have been taken to date relevant to the implementation of the recommendation, and outlines commitment to further action relevant to the implementation of the recommendation.

PAEC recommendation	Response	Action taken to date and commitment to further action
RECOMMENDATION 1 - Government departments should provide a reason for declining to implement Committee recommendations related to additional or more detailed reporting. This should go beyond stating that existing reporting meets minimum requirements.	Support-in-principle	The Victorian Government supports the intent of this recommendation in principle. Where a recommendation to provide additional or more detailed reporting is not supported, departments will aim to provide a clearer explanation of the factors considered in reaching that decision.
RECOMMENDATION 2 - At the end of every financial year, the Department of Treasury and Finance publish an annual statement on the level of Victoria's economic growth as measured by real gross state product and detail how the result impacts the Government's fiscal strategy, specifically steps 4 and 5. This should include how the economic results impact maintaining Victoria's net debt at sustainable levels.	Support-in-principle	The impacts of actual real and nominal Gross State Product (GSP) outcomes on the Government's fiscal strategy, including on steps 4 and 5, are already disclosed in the Government's annual Budget, Budget Update, and Annual Financial Review (AFR) publications. The data release schedules set by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) affect the timing of reporting. GSP data is available only once per year upon release of the ABS State Accounts. This has typically occurred in November (e.g. GSP data for 2025-26 will not be available until 18 November 2026). As a result, historical data for nominal GSP, real GSP and the net debt to GSP ratio will ordinarily be published in the Budget Update toward the end of each calendar year, shortly after the release of the latest ABS State Accounts. For example, the outcome for 2024-25 nominal GSP was published on page 57 of the <i>2025-26 Budget Update</i>, and its impacts on the Government's progress towards meeting steps 4 and 5 over the forward estimates were incorporated in Table 3.1, page 23 of the <i>2025-26 Budget Update</i>. These impacts are also reflected in subsequent publications such as the <i>2026-27 Budget</i> the following year, where the 2024-25 outcome for net debt to GSP was published in Budget Paper 2, Table 1.1, page 5 and Table 4.1, page 47.
RECOMMENDATION 3 - The Department of Health provide more detailed information about total output cost variances in its Annual Report 2025–26.	Support	The Department will strengthen disclosure of material output cost variances, where practicable, by providing clearer explanations of key drivers and significant movements within the existing framework.

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RECOMMENDATION 4 - Once the pill-testing trial is completed, the Department of Health undertake a review of the trial and make its findings, including information about future operations of the service, publicly available.	Support	The Department will transition the Victorian Pill Testing Service from a time-limited implementation trial to an ongoing, regulated service, informed by results from the implementation trial. The department will make findings from the trial public, as appropriate, to inform future delivery service.
RECOMMENDATION 5 - In future financial years, the Department of Health endeavour to better estimate hospital budgets through their draft budgets and finalise these costs through the State Budget process.	Not support	The annual State Budget process confirms the total aggregate funding allocation for health services, and as such is an input into health service budgets. It is therefore not possible to finalise health service budgets until after the State Budget process.
RECOMMENDATION 6 - The Department of Health to report the amount allocated to each hospital and/or health service for each Treasurer's Advance or contingency release in its annual report.	Not support	Treasurer's Advances and contingency releases are applied at a system or program level, rather than being allocated to individual health services. Attributing to individual services would not result in a meaningful or accurate representation of funding flows.
RECOMMENDATION 7 - The Department of Health publicly report occupational violence data from all Victorian healthcare services by individual health service and in an aggregate form each year.	Support	The department supports continued transparency of occupational violence data. Public health services are required to report rates of occupational violence in their annual reports, which are tabled in Parliament. The department will explore other means of reporting at the aggregate level.

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RECOMMENDATION 8 - The Department of Education annually collect and publish data on the number of classrooms in government schools without air conditioning.	Under review	The Department of Education is assessing the feasibility of undertaking the proposed data collection and reporting.
RECOMMENDATION 9 - The Department of Education publish its four-year evaluation of Disability Inclusion's implementation on its website.	Support	The Department of Education engaged Deloitte Access Economics, in collaboration with Victoria University and Monash University, to undertake a rolling evaluation of the reform from 2021 to 2025. As of April 2026, in response to Recommendation 12 of the <i>Report on the 2021–22 and 2022–23 Financial and Performance Outcomes</i> by the Parliamentary Accounts and Estimates Committee - 'that the department publishes the review into Disability Inclusion undertaken in 2022' - the department has published a summary of the key findings of the evaluation on its website and provided the Committee with a copy. This summary reflects findings across all 4 years of the evaluation undertaken by Deloitte Access Economics.
RECOMMENDATION 10 - The Department of Education publish Quality Assessment and Regulation Division performance, activities and regulatory outcomes information for 2024 and 2025 on its website.	Support	Work is progressing to publish the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division performance, activities and regulatory outcomes information for the calendar years 2024 and 2025. With the establishment of the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority on 1 January 2026, the finalised reports for 2024 and 2025 will be published on the VECRA website. This is forecast to be completed concurrent with the release of VECRA's 2025-26 Annual Report.
RECOMMENDATION 11 - The Department of Justice and Community Safety explore ways to report on investments into Emergency Service Organisation appliances to demonstrate well maintained, fit-for purpose fleets, including detail on the safety, utility, age and effectiveness of emergency response appliances.	Support-in-principle	Funding for fleet in emergency service organisation (ESO) appliances is delivered through a range of mechanisms. Budget investment in ESO appliances is reported in the State Budget papers while funding provided through the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) is published on the Emergency Management Victoria website.

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RECOMMENDATION 12 - The Department of Justice and Community Safety and Victoria Police begin to publish data about police cells on a routine basis, including data on the time spent in police cells, how often this exceeds 14 days, the number of people serving full sentences in police cells and the number of decants that take place. This information should also include data around how many times court appearances were rescheduled, adjourned or delayed due to capacity constraints in police cells.	Under review	DJCS and Victoria Police recognise the importance of improved routine reporting on police cell use where data is available and can be reliably produced without disproportionate administrative burden. Data development work would be required to establish this reporting, especially to identify people serving full sentences in police cells, the number of decants that occur, and court delays linked specifically to police cell capacity constraints.
RECOMMENDATION 13 - The Department of Transport and Planning report at least annually on progress towards the targets in Victoria's Housing Statement.	Not support	The Department of Transport and Planning does not publicly report on progress towards the implementation of Victoria's Housing Statement. Publicly available data, including Building Activity data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, provide useful insights into housing delivery in the state.
RECOMMENDATION 14 - The Department of Transport and Planning report quarterly on the average time taken to approve projects through the Development Facilitation Program, disaggregated by type of development.	Support	The Department of Transport and Planning is supportive of providing quarterly reports on the average time taken to approve projects through the Development Facilitation Program. The data is collected and held by DTP and reporting will be provided to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

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RECOMMENDATION 15 - The Department of Transport and Planning report publicly the additional number of houses commenced and completed each quarter as a result of its initiatives and reforms to planning rules.	Not support	Publicly available data, including Building Activity data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, provide useful insights into housing delivery in the state.
RECOMMENDATION 16 - The Department of Transport and Planning or Department of Premier and Cabinet report regularly on the proportion of new housing that is built in established areas and in growth areas against the targets set in Victoria's Housing Statement.	Not support	The Department of Transport and Planning does not publicly report on progress towards the implementation of Victoria's Housing Statement. Publicly available data, including Building Activity data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, provide useful insights into housing delivery in the state.
RECOMMENDATION 17 - The Department of Transport and Planning provide specific timeframes for the public transport connections to Fishermans Bend that are proposed in the Fishermans Bend Integrated Transport Plan.	Not Support	The Fishermans Bend Integrated Transport Plan (2025) identifies a suite of integrated transport initiatives over three broad delivery horizons to support the vision and sustainability goals for Fishermans Bend.

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RECOMMENDATION 18 - Prior to the next State Budget, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action review its performance measures and targets related to biodiversity, forest management and fire and emergency management to ensure they are appropriate for the increased area of forest being managed by the Department.	Support-in-principle	DEECA maintains output performance measures that align with the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) requirements and reflect its activities across all outputs and service delivery areas. Output performance measures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure ongoing relevance, accuracy, reflect service delivery and alignment with government's priorities. The increased area of forest being managed already falls within the existing performance measures of the Department and are outlined below. Management of Public Land and Forests output DEECA has had longstanding land management accountabilities in state forests, including when native timber harvesting was undertaken in state forests. However, when legislation gave effect to the end of native timber harvesting and the dissolution of VicForests, some functions previously delivered by VicForests were transferred to DEECA including post-timber harvesting, forest regeneration, and seed collection and storage. DEECA will consider appropriate measures to include in future state budgets that relate to seed collection and storage, and forest regeneration as part of the transition period out of native timber harvesting. Fire and Emergency Management output DEECA has had longstanding responsibility for bushfire management within all state forests, national parks and protected public land as per the <i>Forests Act 1958</i>, including when native timber harvesting was undertaken in state forests. The timber industry transition did not change these responsibilities and did not increase the area of forests being managed by DEECA with respect to fire and emergency management. The existing measures within DEECA's Department Performance Statement apply across the public land estate and do not need to be updated as a result of the end of native timber harvesting. For example, the annual output performance measure of 2,000 kilometres of 'Strategic fire access roads maintained and improved' is undertaken within DEECA's strategic fire access network, which already includes roads that overlaid VicForests' timber harvesting areas. VicForests previously contributed annual funding to DEECA to undertake these roading works on their behalf, but the program is now wholly funded and delivered by DEECA. Environment and Biodiversity output DEECA has reviewed its Environment and Biodiversity output performance measures as a result of the timber industry transition. The existing Environment and Biodiversity measures within the department performance statement apply across the whole public land estate and continue to be appropriate for environmental outcomes and biodiversity following the end of native timber harvesting. For example, the measures for pest herbivore, predator and weed control are statewide programs targeting priority locations. The performance measure for 'Biodiversity and threatened species surveys completed on forest, fire management activities' has increased from 150 to 250 in 2026-27. This change was related to the greater demand over time for ecological surveys informing DEECA's existing levels of forest and fire management operations. DEECA will continue to review and consider appropriate measures for Management and Public Land and Forests to include in future state budgets, and it will also consider any related measures for Environment and Biodiversity accordingly

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RECOMMENDATION 19 - When explaining variances in performance measure results in its annual reports, the Department of Government Services outline the reasons for changes in demand.	Support	DGS supports this recommendation and, where known, will outline reasons for changes in demand when explaining variances in performance measure results, noting that in some cases changes in demand may not have a clearly explainable cause.
RECOMMENDATION 20 - The Department of Treasury and Finance publish the roadmap for regulator consolidation as part of the 'halve the number of business regulators by 2030' initiative in the Government's Economic Growth Statement.	Support	The Business Regulator Consolidation Reform Program announced in the Economic Growth Statement commits to halve the number of business regulators by 2030. The Victorian Government's formal response to the Independent Review of the Victorian Public Service (Silver Review) outlines regulatory consolidation reforms aimed at reducing red tape and making it easier for businesses to navigate government. These reforms acquit the recommendation to date. Since the release of the Government's Response to the Silver Review, progress has been made across several reforms that will streamline regulation across Victoria. The Building and Plumbing Commission is the first business regulator consolidation completed, establishing a single regulator for the building industry and consumers. The reform to abolish the Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority and transfer some of its functions to DEECA has also been completed. Reforms in the food safety and outdoor recreation sectors are also well progressed.
RECOMMENDATION 21 - The Department of Premier and Cabinet publish the progress reviews and conclusionary evaluations of the China and India strategies as they are conducted.	Support	The Department of Premier and Cabinet will apply a consistent review process to both five-year strategies, and publish progress reviews and conclusionary evaluations of <i>Victoria's India Strategy: Our Shared Future 2025-30</i> and <i>Victoria's China Strategy: For a New Golden Era</i> .

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RECOMMENDATION 22 - The Department of Premier and Cabinet publish specific outcomes associated with the grant funding provided through the Partnership Forum in its Aboriginal Affairs Reports and outline how the work being funded has contributed to progressing toward Closing the Gap targets.	Support	The Department of Premier and Cabinet provides some information on how Victorian Government grant funding is contributing towards Closing the Gap targets in the annual Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report. This includes funding of initiatives across various Victorian Government departments and agencies aimed at achieving Closing the Gap targets. It specifically includes grants administered by DPC for sector strengthening projects led by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and funding to support for the Partnership Forum on Closing the Gap (Partnership Forum). The Partnership Forum does not directly fund activities but it oversees Victoria's action on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and sector strengthening activities. More detailed information can be published on specific outcomes associated with grant funding for Closing the Gap sector strengthening initiatives once they are completed and evaluated.