

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that:

Recommendation 1: **The Department of Treasury and Finance implement strategies, such as identification of a contact area in the budget papers and a suggestion facility on its website, to assist readers experiencing difficulty in locating or comprehending material and to invite suggestions from readers for improving the readability of budget data.**

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Recommendation 2: **As the COAG Reform Agenda unfolds, a Whole of Government section should be included in the budget papers that explains:**

- (a) Victoria’s efforts in contributing to the work agenda of the seven working groups including the Productivity Agenda, actual results against performance measures, future requirements and funding allocations; and**
- (b) how outcomes derived from the Reform Agenda have shaped the Victorian budget.**

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Recommendation 3: **Where productivity improvements form part of economic factors evaluated during the development of major new budget initiatives, these considerations forming part of related business cases or output price reviews should be made clearly visible in the budget papers.**

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Recommendation 4:

In terms of achieving general efficiencies of an administrative nature that are expected to be derived (or any other specific efficiency initiatives announced in future budgets), the Budget Papers should disclose:

- (a) a breakdown by department and various components that make up such efficiencies; and**
- (b) how savings have been utilised in the budget.**

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Recommendation 5:

Given that standardised performance measures have not been developed to measure productivity of government services, departments should quantify examples of productivity gains in their annual reports in order to increase accountability to the community. This practice should also extend to local government agencies, statutory authorities and non government organisations in receipt of substantial grant funding from government.

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Recommendation 6:

The Department of Human Services include in their annual report, details of expenditure to date and progress made on all major infrastructure projects with a TEI in excess of \$10 million.

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Recommendation 7:

Given the increased levels of asset investment by the government, the Department of Treasury and Finance examine the effectiveness of current reporting practices to ensure that public sector agencies keep Parliament and the community informed of progress made in terms of project completion and outcomes delivered through meaningful disclosure in their annual reports.

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Recommendation 8: All departments and their budget funded agencies ensure that complete and accurate information on staffing levels and costs are available to the Committee in future years.

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Recommendation 9: Departments continue to review their output performance measures to ensure that they are relevant to, and that they reflect appropriately, the department's service outcomes and strategic objectives.

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Recommendation 10: The Department of Treasury and Finance incorporate within future budget papers a tabular presentation of annual global movements in new and discontinued output measures, categorised according to quantity, quality and timeliness measures to enhance clarity and accountability in reporting.

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Recommendation 11: Output performance measure targets in budget papers be regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure that they at least reflect historical performance.

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Recommendation 12: Departments act on the Auditor-General's recommendation to provide more detailed explanations of significant and material variations between actual output performance and published targets in the notes to Budget Paper No.3, Service Delivery.

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- Recommendation 13:** From 2009-10, a new budget paper providing a comprehensive overview of the state government programs and initiatives, for regional and rural Victoria, be provided.
- Page 110**
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- Recommendation 14:** The Department of Treasury and Finance monitor weather patterns and ground conditions and determine any required additional budgetary measures for drought relief. Commitments should be detailed in the budget update.
- Page 121**
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- Recommendation 15:** To ensure that the approved allocation of funding to the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund is fully committed and spent in a timely manner, the government will need to accelerate the number of announced projects over the next two years.
- Page 22**
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- Recommendation 16:** In terms of fully disclosing the extent of revenue foregone to the state arising from the granting of concessions, including tax exemptions in the form of tax expenditures, the Department of Treasury and Finance ensure the budget papers contain a greater dissection quantifying the value of taxation exemptions granted, fees waived to particular groups and income not collected due to regulatory reform.
- Page 148**

- Recommendation 17:**
- The Department of Treasury and Finance expand the concessions section of the budget papers by disclosing a more comprehensive breakdown of the estimates that reveals:**
- (a) the various types of concessions (e.g. electricity and gas usage, municipal rates and water and sewerage charges) associated with each category of concession;
 - (b) the estimated number of Victorians/households expected to benefit from these concessions and related programs;
 - (c) the actual number of recipients of concessions for the most recent completed year against estimates for that year;
 - (d) explanations for major variations between the expected number of recipients for the prior year and the current budget estimate; and
 - (e) estimated outlays in the form of subsidies presented in a consolidated form across government.

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- Recommendation 18:**
- The State Government increase awareness among Victorians of the extensive nature of concessions it provides.**

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- Recommendation 19:**
- The Department of Transport provide in its annual report for 2008-09 relevant information relating to the effectiveness of the Early Bird Fare Initiative.**

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- Recommendation 20:**
- The Government review its reporting mechanisms on progress with its infrastructure and asset program with a view to providing Parliament and the Victorian public with a regular and fully transparent account of progress.**

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Recommendation 21:

Where a Committee recommendation is accepted in part the Government response should make clear which part they accept and which they do not, including information about why they do not accept particular parts.

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Recommendation 22:

The Department of Transport assess whether its target for the proportion of freight transported to and from ports by rail to increase to 30 per cent by 2010 is still relevant or needs to be revised. As part of such an assessment, a review needs to be undertaken of climatic conditions and associated forecasts as well as any significant trends in growth in the metropolitan freight task and modal shifts to road in preference to rail for the transportation of freight.

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Recommendation 23:

In addressing the proposals contained in the review of Victoria's Regional Rail Freight Network, which were released in December 2007, the Department of Transport develop a plan that includes:

- (a) a timeline for addressing each of the report's recommendations; and**
- (b) a schedule of programmed works identified for upgrade and maintenance.**

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Recommendation 24:

The Department of Transport, led by VicRoads:

- (a) collect and publicly report statistics on an ongoing basis of the extent of ridesharing among Melbourne’s motorists during peak hour traffic;**
- (b) assess how many riders per car would be necessary to have a significant impact on reducing road traffic congestion;**
- (c) monitor whether car pooling strategies, such as the use of dedicated transit lanes, are effective in reducing the number of cars on Melbourne’s roads during peak periods and improving traffic flow; and**
- (d) determine whether there is a need to extend incentives to encourage a greater level of car pooling, thereby reducing the number of cars and congestion on Victoria’s roads during peak periods.**

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Recommendation 25:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development include in its annual report a comparative assessment of educational outcomes prior to and following the implementation of initiatives within the Victorian Schools Plan.

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Recommendation 26:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development inform the Parliament of its evaluation of education outcomes resulting from the Victorian Schools Plan implementation.

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Recommendation 27:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development examine the reasons behind the significant variations in the performance of Indigenous students across the three benchmarks: reading, writing and numeracy.

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- Recommendation 28:** **The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development report on the effectiveness of the Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future strategy in improving writing, reading and numeracy skills for Indigenous students and use this information to refine the strategy.**
- Page 203**
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- Recommendation 29:** **The Department of Human Services provide Parliament with a cost forecast for the maintenance and replacement of the IT infrastructure over the life of the HealthSMART system.**
- Page 204**
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- Recommendation 30:** **The Department of Human Services provide a detailed timeline and budget for the implementation of the rebaselined clinical systems.**
- Page 206**
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- Recommendation 31:** **A more detailed explanation of the phasing of expenditure for new energy technology projects should be provided to parliament.**
- Page 210**

- Recommendation 32:** **The Department of Treasury and Finance ensure that major projects such as Our Water Our Future, The Next Stage of the Government's Water Plan, the Victorian Schools Plan and Meeting Our Transport Challenges are represented within the budget papers in a clear and consistent manner. Information about the investment in, and progress of, such projects should be easy to identify and understand.**
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- Recommendation 33:** **The Port of Melbourne Corporation disclose fully, the additional Channel Deepening Project budgeted costs identified after the publication of the Supplementary Environmental Effects Statement.**
- Page 217**
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- Recommendation 34:** **The Department of Transport and the Port of Melbourne Corporation disclose fully, the costs incurred by each party in defending the legal challenge to the Channel Deepening Project.**
- Page 219**
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- Recommendation 35:** **The Department of Justice provide information to Parliament on how the initiatives in the Alcohol Action Plan relate to output funding and a proposed timeline for implementation of each initiative.**
- Page 232**
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- Recommendation 36:** **The Department of Justice should provide analysis of performance outcomes under each initiative of the Alcohol Action Plan in its Annual Report.**
- Page 232**

- Recommendation 37:** **Consumer Affairs Victoria should improve transparency regarding the role, goals, objectives and estimated performance outputs of the Liquor Licensing Compliance Directorate by making such information available to Parliament in a timely manner.**
- Page 233**
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- Recommendation 38:** **Aboriginal Affairs Victoria provide an overview of all government programs and initiatives that impact on Indigenous Victorians and monitor and report performance of these in a one centralised area.**
- Page 235**
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- Recommendation 39:** **That the Government review the Departmental Output Statements in Budget Paper No. 3 with a view to ensuring that the strategic actions identified in the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework are adequately reflected.**
- Page 238**
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- Recommendation 40.** **That the Department of Justice reinstate the individual measures associated with timeliness in relation to each of the major courts of Victoria.**
- Page 242**
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- Recommendation 41.** **That the Auditor-General undertake further performance audits of the Courts.**
- Page 242**

- Recommendation 42:** **The Department of Transport publish on its website:**
- (a) a plain English summary of the Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model; and
 - (b) further details on the risk scores and risk rankings.

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- Recommendation 43:** **The Department of Transport provide the following information (e.g. in its annual report) relating to the unfolding of the level crossing safety program:**
- (a) the particular crossings assessed as requiring priority works, together with the associated risk mitigation treatments to be applied at each crossing in summary form;
 - (b) the safety improvement works that have been undertaken at each level crossing; and
 - (c) a timeline covering the safety improvement works that are planned to be undertaken.

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- Recommendation 44:** **The Department of Planning and Community Development publish a schedule that discloses the expected timeframe for completion of each Precinct Structure Plan.**

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- Recommendation 45:** **To ensure that meaningful information is disclosed in the budget papers dealing with progress made in relation to precinct structure planning, the Department of Treasury and Finance ensure that the target for the performance measure titled ‘Proportion of Precinct Structure Plans completed in accordance with adopted process’ include the number of Precinct Structure Plans expected to be completed during the year.**

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Recommendation 46: Performance measures be developed on a progressive basis to assess the effectiveness of the Precinct Structure Planning Program in achieving the desired outcomes. This information be disclosed in the Department of Planning and Community Development's annual report and budget papers.

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Recommendation 47: The Department of Parliamentary Services should review the need for implementation of an archival/automated storage and retrieval process for video webcasting recordings.

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Recommendation 48: The State Government funds in the forthcoming budgets the Department of Parliamentary Services so as to ensure the introduction of video webcasting of the Legislative Assembly proceedings in 2009-10 and the Legislative Council in 2010-11.

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Recommendation 49: The Department of Parliamentary Services should conduct a follow up review to determine whether the Parliamentary web casting systems are operating effectively and whether or not the anticipated benefits of implementation are being realised.

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