

## MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY, 31 AUGUST 2021

### **Auditor-General's report to Parliament on COVID-19: Community Support Measures**

The Auditor-General, Mr Rod Whitehead, tabled his Report on the funding of COVID-19 Community Support Measures in Parliament today.

The review assessed the Department of Communities Tasmania's implementation of the Supporting our Veterans COVID-19 Grants Program and the Community Support Fund.

The Community Support Fund met the cost of hotel quarantine and funded services to support Tasmanians in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department delivered services to Tasmanians through grant deeds with community service providers and the Local Emergency Food Relief COVID-19 Grants Program.

Mr Whitehead said, 'Implementation of the Community Support Fund and the Supporting our Veterans Program was generally effective'.

Mr Whitehead noted that the Department adopted a flexible approach to agreements with hotel operators. An active register of suitable hotels helped meet demand for rooms between April 2020 and April 2021. The highest demand for quarantine rooms was in July 2020. During that month, 2,012 people were accommodated in 14 quarantine facilities across Tasmania. The review identified the Department's approach to contracting and managing hotel quarantine facilities improved over time.

Mr Whitehead found that although the Department executed and monitored funding agreements with community service providers effectively, the Department was not involved in selecting the funding recipients or determining the amount of funding to be awarded from the Community Support Fund. Mr Whitehead said, 'Often Communities Tasmania was informed of the funding decisions from Ministerial press releases.'

Although the review identified some opportunities for the Department to improve the way grant programs are administered, implementation of the Supporting our Veterans Program and Food Relief Program was generally effective.

Mr Whitehead made three recommendations, one aimed at improving the transparency of funding decisions in emergency response and recovery situations, and two to assist the Department in improving the administration of grant programs.

The complete Report can be downloaded from [www.audit.tas.gov.au](http://www.audit.tas.gov.au).

ENDS

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