

MEDIA RELEASE - THURSDAY, 29 September 2022

Auditor-General's report to Parliament on improving outcomes for Tasmanian senior secondary students

Today the Auditor-General, Mr Rod Whitehead, tabled his report on improving outcomes for Tasmanian senior secondary students.

The audit assessed the effectiveness of the Department of Education's implementation of certain education reforms, including the extension of all State Secondary Schools through to Year 12 (Extension Program), implementation of the Australian Council for Educational Research 2016 review recommendation (the Years 9 to 12 Project) and implementation of the Youth Participation Database to support compliance with the approved learning program requirements of the *Education Act 2016*.

Overall, Mr Whitehead found, there was an absence of detailed planning and periodic risk reviews for the projects, and the availability of project management expertise, key person dependencies and inconsistent record keeping also impacted the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation. Seven recommendations were made to improve the way the Department implements reforms.

Mr Whitehead stated, 'when implementing government policy, project planning should include consideration of options available for implementation. For example, for the Extension Program the Department moved straight to implementing the policy reforms laid out by the newly elected Liberal Government in 2014 without full consideration of implementation options.'

Pleasingly, Mr Whitehead said, 'once communication frameworks were in place, communication with, and input from, stakeholders was generally effective across the projects.'

In addressing the impact of the broader education reforms Mr Whitehead found performance is heading in the right direction, but the range of education reforms implemented since 2014 makes it difficult to attribute the improvement in senior secondary student education outcomes to any individual reform initiative. He noted access to courses, retention rates and attainment rates, while still below comparable national measures, had all improved over the period covered by the audit.

The complete Report can be downloaded from www.audit.tas.gov.au.

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