

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 27 August 2020

Auditor-General Report to Parliament on the Management of Underperformance in the Tasmanian State Service

Auditor-General Rod Whitehead today submitted his report to Parliament on the Management of Underperformance in the Tasmanian State Service (TSS) with four recommendations for improvement. The audit focused on the framework established and activities undertaken to manage underperformance of employees in four Government departments (Agencies).

Mr Whitehead found Agency policies and procedures were aligned, and complied, with Employment Direction 26 *Managing Performance in the State Service*, however, a significant proportion of managers and staff did not believe that underperformance was understood nor effectively managed in the TSS or in their Agency.

The audit found performance management procedures encouraged managers to provide ongoing and regular feedback to employees and supported prompt intervention when underperformance was identified. However, the application of the performance management framework was inconsistent between Agencies, and varied considerably within each Agency depending on the capability, capacity and commitment of individual managers.

Mr Whitehead stated, “Variability in the application of the performance management framework contributed to a culture where underperformance may be tolerated, or considered too difficult or time consuming for managers to deal with.”

Mr Whitehead noted Agencies maintained centralised record-keeping systems that included documents relating to formal underperformance processes, and were generally able to monitor compliance with key performance management processes. However, the ability of agencies to monitor the total number of underperforming employees, the impact of underperformance and the effectiveness of underperformance management, was significantly constrained by system, capability, resourcing and information limitations.

Mr Whitehead stated, “Agencies limited visibility of the extent of informally managed underperformance beyond ad-hoc reporting or anecdotal comments from managers prevented Agencies from being able to assess the total impact of underperformance from an Agency-wide perspective or effectively target responses to address underperformance.”

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

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