

28 April 2020

Tasmanian Audit Office response to COVID-19

This communication is addressed to all Tasmanian Audit Office contacts and stakeholders to inform you on how we are working with State entities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Firstly, I would like to extend my best wishes to everyone in these unprecedented times. I am very aware of the increased pressure and tempo that State entities are experiencing in continuing to deliver core services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is particularly acute for entities delivering frontline and essential services.

The Tasmanian Audit Office (TAO) remains committed to working with State entities to fulfil our responsibility to provide assurance to the Parliament of Tasmania, and the broader community, on the performance of the government. Our philosophy is to focus on the health and wellbeing of people as our first priority, and to take an informed approach in the performance of our work that is sensible and balanced. This includes minimising disruption of service to State entities.

All TAO staff are currently working from home with requests to attend State entity premises assessed on a case by case basis. As a workforce accustomed to working remotely during the conduct of audits we have well-established systems and processes in place and are confident we can continue to provide efficient and effective audit services during this time.

Additional measures we have introduced to ensure continuity of audit services include:

- conducting videoconference meetings rather than in-person meetings
- establishing shared portals to facilitate the sharing of data and information
- obtaining direct read-only access to client finance systems
- communicating with State entities to identify audit activities that can be done earlier, and those that are better done later.

A number of State entities have enquired about dates for financial statement submission and audit completion. At present there have been no changes to the legislated timeframes, although the *COVID-19 Disease Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020* provides for statutory timeframes to be extended at the relevant Minister's discretion. We will continue to monitor the situation with State entities and will engage with the Treasurer on this matter if required.

Our performance audit team is continuing to complete performance audits in progress, with a number of those audits reaching draft report stage. Tabling of performance audits will continue in accordance with our existing practice on the resumption of the Tasmanian Parliament.

All future updates, including COVID-19 impacts on financial reporting and financial and performance audit completion, will be posted on our website www.audit.tas.gov.au.

If you have any issues or questions about a current or upcoming audit, I encourage you to contact your audit engagement leader in the first instance. I also welcome any feedback or information you may wish to provide via email to admin@audit.tas.gov.au.

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