

**APPENDIX 3: THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE
COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON THE 2008-09 BUDGET
ESTIMATES - PART THREE**

Government Responses to the Recommendations of
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE'S
80th Report on the 2008-09 Budget Estimates

Pursuant to Section 36 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, this paper provides a response to the recommendations contained in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's (PAEC) 80th Report.

Guide for Readers:

Following is the explanation of the format of this paper.

1 Chapter number and topic			
2 Responsibility			
1 PAEC Recommendation	2 Response	3 Action Taken to Date	4 Further Action Planned

Row 1: Indicates the number and topic of the response to the PAEC recommendations.

Row 2: Indicates the Department with primary responsibility for responding to the recommendation as outlined in the PAEC Report.

Column 1: Contains the PAEC's recommendations as published in its 80th Report.

Column 2: Indicates the Government's response to each recommendation (**Accept, Accept in part/principle, Under Review or Reject**).

Column 3: Indicates those actions relevant to the implementation of the recommendation that have been taken to date.

Column 4: **Indicates the additional actions planned that are relevant to implementation of the recommendation, together with an explanation of the Government's position concerning the recommendation.**

Note: The recommendation made by PAEC concerning the Victorian Auditor-General's Office relates to an issue that are operational in nature. As the Victorian Auditor-General's Office is an independent government entity, the Government has made a broad comment on this recommendation and considers that a direct response should be issued by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office independent to the Government Response.

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Recommendation 1 (Page 24)			
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.	Accept	The Department of Treasury and Finance has added a contact area to the Budget and other related publication websites to help readers access assistance and provide feedback. The department will assess if any further action is required post implementation.	No further action is planned at this time.
Recommendation 2 (Page 62)			
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.	Accept in Principle	The 2008-09 Budget included a chapter on the economic reform agenda, which outlined the actions being pursued by the Victorian Government to maintain Victoria's economic prosperity. This reform program included both State based actions and national reforms developed through forums such as COAG.	Performance against reform milestones agreed by COAG will be publicly reported by the COAG Reform Council. This will allow the community to understand the Victorian Government's performance both over time, and compared to other States and Territories. This will be the primary mechanism by which all governments will report results against COAG performance measures. The Department of Treasury and Finance will continue to review opportunities for government to transparently report on the outcomes of COAG reforms.
Recommendation 3 (Page 62)			
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.	Accept in Principle	Individual efficiency initiatives, inclusive of productivity improvements, are generally reported in Appendix A of <i>Budget Paper No. 3, Service Delivery</i> . Productivity improvements anticipated arising from individual departmental proposals or output reviews are included in the total funding for these proposals, however it is not always possible or appropriate to separately identify these details.	The Department of Treasury and Finance will endeavour to clearly identify anticipated productivity improvements in future publications, where it is appropriate and possible to do so.

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Recommendation 4 (Page 62)			
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.	Reject	The Government and its departments do not normally apply any income derived from savings or efficiencies to specific projects as it is contrary to the principles of the Government's financial management and accountability framework. However, in some situations, such as the Government's <i>Efficient Government</i> policy, the value and sources of savings revenue is disclosed. The State Government's financial framework focuses on the delivery of outputs and outcomes rather than the day-to-day management of departmental inputs. This framework is in line with practice across the Australian public sector and based on international experience. Under this framework, departments are not required to report to the Government how agreed efficiency targets are achieved as this is an internal management concern.	As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the Department of Treasury and Finance will continue to review public finance and accountability practices for possible adoption.
Recommendation 5 (Page 62)			
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.	Accept in Principle	Departments, in consultation with the Department of Treasury and Finance, are continually identifying and implementing productivity improvements and efficiency gains achieved. The Government supports departments in enhancing their annual reporting requirements with the adoption of individual performance productivity measurements, where appropriate. At the December 2008 COAG meeting, the Victorian Government agreed to some high level principles to improve the accountability and performance reporting to the public through simpler, more transparent public performance reporting. The new performance reporting framework will focus on the achievement of results, efficient service delivery and timely provision of the data.	The implementation of the new performance reporting and public accountability arrangements are currently being developed in consultation with the departments.
Recommendation 6 (Page 72)			
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.	Reject	Departments are currently not required to disclose in their annual reports the progress made towards the implementation of individual capital projects. The reporting and disclosure practices of government have been established based on current accepted accounting standards and legislation. As with all departments, the Department of Human Services reports annually on the expenditure made on capital projects in <i>Budget Information Paper No. 1</i> .	The Department of Treasury and Finance will continue to review its reporting practices to ensure they remain compliance with current standards and legislation.

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Recommendation 7 (Page 78)			
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.	Accept	<p>Each year the Government publishes a report on its Public Sector Asset Investment Program in <i>Budget Information Paper No. 1 (BIP1)</i>. The purpose of BIP1 is primarily to inform Parliament and the community about the Victorian Government's capital asset program.</p> <p>BIP1 provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed listings of major asset investment for the general government sector and for major public non-financial corporations; • summary information for a number of significant government-owned corporations providing goods and services in a commercial market place; and • disclosures of major public sector asset investment projects delivered under <i>Partnerships Victoria</i>. <p>In addition, the <i>2007-08 Annual Financial Report for the State of Victoria</i> again provides a comparison of the total infrastructure investment against the most recently published revised budget. This information is in Chapter 2 <i>General Government Sector Outcome</i>, which provides capital project progress commentary and data on each individual department and also for the net contribution to other sectors of government.</p>	<p>The Department of Treasury and Finance is currently reviewing Victoria's public finance practices and legislation.</p> <p>The structure and content of all the Budget papers are being considered as part of this review.</p>
Recommendation 8 (Page 82)			
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.	Accept	<p>All departments are required to disclose their staffing levels and employee expenses in their annual report.</p> <p>Further, the Government has encouraged all departments to adopt and maintain accurate staff information in order to be able to provide PAEC, and other committees, accurate and timely information on employee numbers and costs.</p>	<p>The Department of Treasury and Finance is currently reviewing Victoria's public finance practices and legislation.</p> <p>Departmental reporting practices are being considered as part of this review.</p>

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Recommendation 9 (Page 95)			
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.	Accept	Each year, in the development of the annual State Budget and in consultation with the Department of Treasury and Finance, all departments are required to review their performance measures and update them appropriately. Any new measures are reviewed by the Department of Treasury and Finance to ensure that they appropriately reflect the department's intended outcomes, whether qualitative or quantitative. Department's performance measures are reported in <i>Budget Paper No. 3, Service Delivery</i> , which also provides commentary and explanations on reasons for changed and discontinued performance measures.	All departments will continue to be required to review and update, if necessary, their output performance measures each year. No further action is required at this time.
Recommendation 10 (Page 97)			
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.	Accept in Principle	<i>Budget Paper No. 3, Service Delivery</i> provides information on each department's output structures, including its performance measures and targets, categorised according to quantity, quality and timeliness measures. Changes to performance measures and structures are commented on globally in the introduction to each department and specifically in the footnotes to performance measures. While a tabular presentation of changes in the number of performance measures is not currently published, a table outlining the changes to a department's output funding structure is provided in <i>Budget Paper No. 3, Service Delivery</i> .	As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the Department of Treasury and Finance will continue to review the structure and content of all the Budget papers.
Recommendation 11 (Page 100)			
Output performance measure targets in budget papers be regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure that they at least reflect historical performance.	Accept in Principle	Departmental performance measures and targets are reviewed by departments and the Department of Treasury and Finance each year. When reviewing performance targets, historical performance is only one consideration. Apart from past performance, measures and targets are regularly amended to also reflect expected performance, changes to the amount of funding provided, or to demonstrate efficiency gains. However, in some instances, annual targets may be significantly exceeded or un-achieved. This may be due to a 'one-off' event or exceptional circumstances which cannot be accurately predicted. In these instances, it would not be appropriate to amend the ongoing annual target. Other targets are subject to demands that are outside the control of departments and targets are based on estimates only.	The Government will continue to require departments review and update their output performance targets each year to ensure that they reflect historical performance, where possible and relevant.

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Recommendation 12 (Page 100)			
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.	Accept in Principle	<p>For the preparation of the departmental output statements for publication in <i>Budget Paper No. 3, Service Delivery</i>, all departments are required to provide detailed explanations of significant and material variations between actual output performance and published targets. At a minimum, variations greater than 5 per cent are required to be explained by way of a footnote.</p> <p>The explanations provided by departments are reviewed by the Department of Treasury and Finance to ensure they are accurate and appropriately comprehensive to meet the needs of Budget Paper users. Departments have been requested to provide additional information in instances where it is considered that adequate commentary has not been provided.</p>	The Department of Treasury and Finance will continue to review the explanations provided by departments on variations between actual and targeted performance outcomes and seek further details from departments if existing commentary is not considered adequate.
Recommendation 13 (Page 110)			
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.	Under Review	<p>Through various budget papers, including the <i>Budget Overview</i> and <i>Budget Information Paper No. 1</i>, the Government currently reports on the initiatives that are specifically targeted to each of the six regional geographic segments in Victoria. Further, the Government publishes progress reports on the implementation of regional-specific programs, such as <i>Provincial Victoria</i>.</p> <p>State-wide initiatives are not currently included in these regional reports as the impacts of such initiatives cannot be reliably dissected between the regions and metropolitan areas.</p> <p>For the <i>2008-09 Budget</i>, the Department of Treasury and Finance conducted a review of the structure and contents of the Budget Papers. The purpose of the review was to improve the effectiveness and readability of the papers. The key changes arising from this review is that Budget Paper No. 2 was restructured to provide greater information on the PNFC sector and to clarify the impact of risks on estimates.</p>	The Department of Treasury and Finance will continue to review the structure and contents of the Budget Papers. As part of this review, consideration will be given to the manner in which regional initiatives are reported.

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Recommendation 14 (Page 121)			
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.	Accept in Principle	The Department of Treasury and Finance monitors primary industry conditions as part of its activities in monitoring and forecasting trends in the Victorian economy. The Department of Treasury and Finance is also a member of the Drought Interdepartmental Coordination Group (DICG) which advises the ministerial Drought Taskforce Committee (DTC) on weather patterns, drought conditions and appropriate drought assistance. As with all post-budget funding decisions, new commitments will be published in the <i>2008-09 Budget Update</i> or <i>2009-10 Budget</i> , where appropriate.	No further action is planned at this time.
Recommendation 15 (Page 122)			
To ensure that the approved allocation of funding of 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.	Reject	Regional Development Victoria (RDV) has historically committed Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) allocations in accordance with annual budget phasing. The number of RIDF-funded projects approved in 2006-07 and 2007-08 have increased significantly compared to previous years. Actual expenditure of funding typically lags behind these approvals. This is reflective of the long lead time required for infrastructure projects and the milestone and performance based funding agreements that are a feature of the RIDF.	Through the RIDF, RDV will continue to support projects that deliver economic benefits to regional Victoria. RDV will continue to work to ensure that the RIDF allocation is committed to approved projects in accordance with the agreed budget phasing. Expenditure will continue to follow approvals based on agreed project milestones.
Recommendation 16 (Page 148)			
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.	Accept in Part	A detailed breakdown of tax expenditures is provided in the 2008-09 Budget and can be found in Chapter 5 of <i>Budget Paper No.4, Statement of Finances</i> . The Department of Treasury and Finance does not separately report on the income derived from regulatory reform from other tax income as this information cannot currently be accurately extracted.	Future Budget papers will continue to provide detailed breakdown of tax expenditures. The Department of Treasury and Finance plans to investigate including a finer breakdown of tax expenditures and the feasibility of including the value of fees waived.

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Recommendation 17 (Page 149)			
<p>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:</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(b) the estimated number of Victorians/households expected to benefit from these concessions and related programs;</p> <p>(c) the actual number of recipients of concessions for the most recent completed year against estimates for that year;</p> <p>(d) explanations for major variations between the expected number of recipients for the prior year and the current budget estimate; and</p> <p>(e) estimated outlays in the form of subsidies presented in a consolidated form across government.</p>	<p>Accept in Principle</p>	<p>Information on concessions, and their costs, is provided in 2008-09 Budget. Chapter 5 of <i>Budget Paper No.4, Statement of Finances</i> provides an overview of the concessions available to Victorians, including the aggregate cost to Government to provide them. Appendix A of <i>Budget Paper No. 3, Service Delivery</i>, provides more information on individual concessions that have been newly established by Government.</p> <p>Further information on individual concessions, including eligibility criteria, is readily available from departmental websites and publications.</p>	<p>The Department of Treasury and Finance will look into the feasibility and practicality of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> including the number of benefiting households in Budget papers or other suitable publications showing comparisons of actual versus estimates in Budget papers or other suitable publications showing explanations of major variances in Budget papers or other suitable publications The Department of Treasury and Finance also plans to examine the feasibility of showing the value of subsidies (grants) that resemble concession programs.
Recommendation 18 (Page 149)			
<p>The State Government increase awareness among Victorians of the extensive nature of concessions it provides.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>The latest brochure, "State concessions – your entitlements", was published by the Concessions Unit of the Department of Human Services in November 2008. This brochure was widely disseminated and is readily available to the public through a range of accessible formats.</p>	<p>In 2009, the Department of Human Services will seek to improve the take-up of concessions among concession card holders and ensure that senior Victorians, CALD and indigenous groups are able to access and understand information provided on concessions.</p>

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Recommendation 19 (Page 150)			
The Department of Transport provide in its annual report for 2008-09 relevant information relating to the effectiveness of the Early Bird Fare Initiative.	Accept	<p>Train load surveys were conducted in October 2008 which allowed pre-7am loads at stations to be compared with the October 2007 survey, which had taken place prior to the introduction of Early Bird initiative.</p> <p>Although the customer and load surveys are the primary means of assessing the effectiveness of the Early Bird initiative, other ongoing data collection can prove to be useful supplementary data on customer behaviour.</p> <p>The key to evaluating the success of the Early Bird initiative is to understand the proportion of pre-7am travelers who had shifted their travel behavior to take advantage of the free ticket. Therefore, in addition to ticket validation data and train load surveys, the Department of Transport commissioned over 900 short face-to-face interviews on stations between 5am and 7:30am in September 2008, five and a half months after the introduction of the Early Bird initiative across the entire metropolitan train network.</p>	<p>The Customer Satisfaction Monitor (CSM) program allows ongoing tracking of customer satisfaction with key elements that are potentially influenced by the Early Bird initiative, such as satisfaction with pricing, comfort and overall satisfaction with the train service.</p> <p>Ticket validation data is also collected on an ongoing basis and can assist in understanding how passenger travel behaviours are changing over time.</p> <p>Both of these data sources will be monitored and analysed on an ongoing basis to assist in the assessment of the effectiveness of the Early Bird initiative.</p> <p>The Department of Transport will provide relevant information relating to the effectiveness of the Early Bird Fare Initiative in its annual report for 2008-09.</p>
Recommendation 20 (Page 156)			
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.	Accept in Principle	<p>The Government reports expenditure against major asset investments (including existing and new projects) for the general government sector and major public non-financial corporations in <i>Budget Information Paper No 1</i> (BIP1).</p> <p>BIP1 provides a more detailed examination of the Government's asset program than what is currently published in the budget papers. It provides information on progress achieved on key strategic projects being undertaken, the expenditure to date and the estimated remaining expenditure against capital projects that have a Total Estimated Investment over \$240 000.</p>	The Department of Treasury and Finance will continue to regularly review the structure and contents of the Budget Papers.
Recommendation 21 (Page 158)			
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.	Accept in Principle	<p>The Government agrees that responses to inquiry recommendations should be more detailed than they are at present where the response warrants such detail.</p> <p>The Government agrees that an explanation should be provided for recommendations not supported by the government.</p>	The Government will review the responses it provides to PAEC recommendations and seek to provide further clarification of proposals accepted in part, where practical.

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Recommendation 22 (Page 176)			
<p>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.</p>	<p>Accept in principle</p>	<p>The Department of Transport has conducted an assessment as to whether the target for the proportion of freight transported to and from ports by rail is likely to increase to 30 percent by 2010.</p> <p>It was concluded that the drought conditions in recent years have contributed to a decline in the overall proportion carried by rail (12.3 per cent) and the restoration of average to good harvests and grain export volumes would provide some increase in the overall volume of freight carried by rail. However, the proportion carried is unlikely to rise above approximately 15 per cent due to projected strong growth in metropolitan container volumes, which are not serviced by rail.</p> <p>In addition, the current measure only relates to port freight and does not take into account how much of the total freight task is feasible to be carried by rail. These finding have led to the conclusion that a rail freight target of 30 per cent by 2010 cannot be met and needs to be re-evaluated.</p> <p>The State and Federal Governments have made significant investments in regional and interstate rail infrastructure including rehabilitation of the regional rail network. This work will enable freight currently carried by rail, whether port based or not, to be retained and will attract increased freight in these market segments onto rail.</p> <p>Additionally, as outlined in the <i>Victorian Transport Plan</i>, the State Government remains committed to increasing rail freight movements to and from Victoria's commercial ports. To achieve this, the Government has released <i>Freight Futures - The Victorian Freight Network Strategy</i>, which outlines plans to establish a metropolitan freight terminal network for Melbourne and reshape freight flows to and from the Port. With effective governance arrangements, improvements to rail access, and investment in metropolitan freight terminals, it is anticipated that rail may have an increased role in metropolitan freight in the future.</p>	<p><i>Freight Futures</i> outlines further work for moving more freight by rail and as part of this work the measure will be revised to better monitor the impact of Federal and State government investment with a focus on total freight movements.</p>

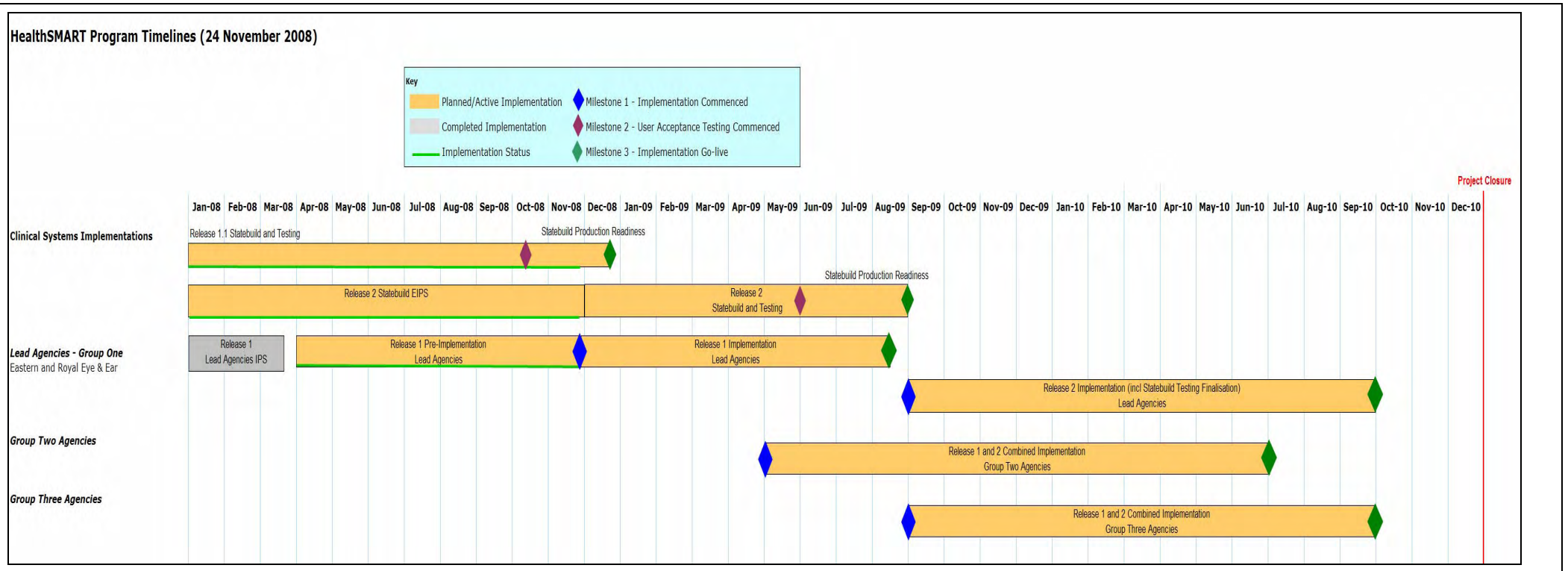
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Recommendation 23 (Page 179)			
<p>In addressing the proposals contained in the review of Victoria's Regional Rail Freight Network, which were released in December 2007, the Department of Transport develop a plan that includes:</p> <p>(a) a timeline for addressing each of the report's recommendations; and</p> <p>(b) a schedule of programmed works identified for upgrade and maintenance.</p>	<p>Accept in principle</p>	<p>The Government acted immediately on the key recommendations of the Victorian Rail Freight Network Review (RFNR) and many recommendations have now been addressed, including:</p> <p>the issue of the level of access fees and the recommended support for intermodal terminals was addressed with a 2 year \$21.4 million freight support package (February 2008);</p> <p>\$23.7million was allocated to rehabilitate six of the seven Gold Lines identified in the Report (April 2008);</p> <p>the Maroona- Portland line was leased to ARTC for management and rehabilitation (July 2008);</p> <p>the \$501.5 million North East Rail Revitalisation Project, which incorporates standardisation of the North East rail line, and the \$50 million Port of Melbourne Rail Access Improvement project as recommended by RFNR were announced (September 2008); and</p> <p>following discussions with the grain industry and undertakings by storage and handling companies to secure train capacity and improve silo operations, \$38.7 million was allocated to upgrade Silver Lines, which included standardisation of the Benalla -Oaklands line (October 2008).</p> <p>A number of recommendations are the subject of further work and ongoing negotiations, including actions related to further rail standardisation, which will be considered as and when opportunities arise.</p> <p>Based on the level of funding available a works program for the upgrade of regional freight rail lines has been established.</p> <p>Bronze Lines totalling approximately 500km (30 percent of the freight only network) will not be rehabilitated and will become unavailable for train operations. Their future use will depend on whatever business opportunities arise (e.g. mineral sands).</p> <p>Iluka has sought a commitment by the Government to rehabilitate 2 Bronze Lines in 2011/12 in order to facilitate movement of up to 500,000 tonnes of mineral sands by rail rather than road. This project has been included in the Green Triangle programme of projects and discussions with Iluka are ongoing.</p>	<p>The rehabilitation works program will be completed, monitored and prioritised as dictated by freight demand.</p> <p>The department will maintain ongoing discussions with stakeholders regarding a number of regulatory and institutional issues raised by RFNR in order to improve planning for rail freight, reduce barriers to entry and encourage increased use of rail.</p> <p>The Department of Transport will seek capital and recurrent funding to support ongoing maintenance of the network.</p>

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Recommendation 24 (Page 194)			
<p>The Department of Transport, led by VicRoads:</p> <p>(a) collect and publicly report statistics on an ongoing basis of the extent of ridesharing among Melbourne's motorists during peak hour traffic;</p> <p>(b) assess how many riders per car would be necessary to have a significant impact on reducing road traffic congestion;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p>	<p>Accept in principle</p>	<p>VicRoads collects statistics through its 'traffic system performance monitoring', including data on lane and vehicle occupancy, which are published in the annual <i>Traffic Monitor</i>. The Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity 2007 (VISTA 07), conducted by Department of Transport, also includes information about vehicle occupancy.</p> <p>The Transport Energy Branch of the Department of Transport has modeled the effects on greenhouse gas emissions of increasing riders per car, which could also be extrapolated to congestion.</p> <p>VicRoads commissioned Sinclair Knight Merz to undertake a study of high occupancy vehicle lanes in Melbourne, which found that the T2 lane on the Eastern Freeway saved about 5 minutes of personal travel time.</p> <p>Both the above mentioned Sinclair Knight Merz report and a separate report by ARRB commissioned by VicRoads, 'Road user perceptions of transit lanes', provided some information about possible future strategies for encouraging car-pooling.</p>	<p>VicRoads will continue to collect statistics through its 'traffic system performance monitoring'. VISTA 07 continues to be analysed and has the capacity to provide further information about this issue. A second round of VISTA data collection will also be initiated in late 2009.</p> <p>Further modeling of the impact of percentage changes to vehicle occupancy on congestion may be undertaken.</p> <p>Further investigation of the effectiveness of high occupancy vehicle lanes will be conducted as part of the <i>Victorian Transport Plan</i>.</p> <p>As part of the <i>Victorian Transport Plan</i>, the Government will deliver a package of initiatives to encourage carpooling over the short term and into the future. This will include a range of incentives and targeted programs aimed at reducing congestion and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.</p>

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Recommendation 25 (Page 197)			
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.	Accept in Part	<p>The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has developed a benefits evaluation framework that will be used to collect feedback on the benefits achieved from the completion of <i>Victorian Schools Plan</i> capital projects.</p> <p>This benefits evaluation framework includes the short term benefits that will be achieved, such as improved learning environment, reduced maintenance requirements, improved interior natural lighting and improved ventilation levels. These measures will be able to be reported on once an individual school project has been delivered and is available for school use, normally between 12-18 months following a project's announcement, with long-term measures of improved student outcomes becoming evident in following 12-24 months. Detailed post occupancy evaluation results are expected to be available after 12 months of building use.</p> <p>A summary of these benefits for a sample of projects are anticipated to be included in the 2008-09 Annual Report.</p> <p>The capital initiatives in the <i>Victorian Schools Plan</i> are just one of the initiatives adopted by the State Government to improve student outcomes, which are attributed to a number of factors.</p>	The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will trial the benefits evaluation framework over the next 18 months to enable reliable reporting of improvements in student outcomes related to the <i>Victorian Schools Plan</i> . Once the long term evaluation framework has been refined results from a sample of schools will be included in future Annual Reports.
Recommendation 26 (Page 198)			
The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development inform the Parliament of its evaluation of education outcomes resulting from the Victorian Schools Plan implementation.	Accept	The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's 2008-09 Annual Report will include information on the short term benefits arising from <i>Victorian Schools Plan</i> projects. The Annual Report will be tabled in Parliament, thereby meeting disclosure and reporting requirements.	Once the long term benefits evaluation framework has been refined, the results from a sample of schools will be included in future Annual Reports, which will also be tabled in Parliament.
Recommendation 27 (Page 202)			
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.	Accept	In 2007, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development undertook the most comprehensive review of Koorie education in Victoria. The review covered the performance of Koorie students across literacy and numeracy education benchmarks. Recommendations from the review assisted the Department in developing the new education strategy for Koorie students, <i>Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future</i> .	The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will continue to assess the educational outcomes of Koorie students and ensure that recommendations from the review are implemented through the education strategy for Koorie students, <i>Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future</i> .

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Recommendation 28 (Page 203)			
The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development report on the effectiveness of the <i>Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future</i> strategy in improving writing, reading and numeracy skills for Indigenous students and use this information to refine the strategy.	Accept	<p>The Government's Koorie student strategy, <i>Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future</i>, has been developed by various areas across the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, including those responsible for literacy and numeracy. These programs are scheduled for implementation from term 1, 2009.</p> <p>Initiatives outlined in <i>Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future</i> that are designed to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes for Koorie students include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the employment of 15 new Literacy Coaches specifically for teachers of Koorie students; and • assisting regions in implementing Individual Education Plans for all Koorie students. 	<p>The success of the Koorie specific Individual Education Plans will be evaluated by the Department.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will be reporting on the outcomes of the <i>Wannik</i> strategy at regular intervals through a range of reporting frameworks.</p>
Recommendation 29 (Page 204)			
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 <i>HealthSMART</i> system.	Accept in Principle	<p><i>HealthSMART</i> is a collective program of a series of discrete projects which commence and finish at different stages throughout the program life cycle, delivering new technology and new applications in the health sector. To ensure functionality, agencies may refresh their local ICT infrastructure at various stages in readiness to roll-out <i>HealthSMART</i> applications.</p> <p>The <i>HealthSMART</i> program has been audited by the Office of the Victorian Auditor General during 2007-08 and the auditor's report was tabled in Parliament.</p> <p>As part of the established <i>HealthSMART</i> reporting process, the key technology replacement and maintenance activities and associated expenditure is identified and included in financial position reporting. The financial position of each project is reported to the <i>HealthSMART</i> Services Steering Committee and Board of Health Information Systems on a bi-monthly basis.</p>	<i>HealthSMART</i> will continue to be open to the scrutiny of the Office of the Victorian Auditor General and its reporting as required to Parliament.

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Recommendation 30 (Page 206)			
The Department of Human Services provide a detailed timeline and budget for the implementation of the rebaselined clinical systems.	Accept	<p>The individual State Build and Implementation project plans have been consolidated and baselined into the program implementation schedule. Progress will be measured against this baseline.</p> <p>There has been no material impact on the original <i>HealthSMART</i> program budget to deliver the clinical applications. The budget for this remains at approximately \$91 million.</p> <p>The illustration below shows the current project timelines for Clinical Systems implementation for the period January 2008 to December 2010.</p>	No further action planned.



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Recommendation 31 (Page 210)												
A more detailed explanation of the phasing of expenditure for new energy technology projects should be provided to parliament.	Accept in Principle	<p>The annual phasing over six years of the expenditure approved for the two energy technology projects, are detailed in a footnote to the projects in Appendix A of <i>Budget Paper No.3, Service Delivery</i>.</p> <p>In this footnote, the \$137 million is reported to be allocated over 2012-13 and 2013-14 as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project</th> <th>2012-13</th> <th>2013-14</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Large Scale Demonstration Project - Carbon Capture and Storage:</td> <td>\$31 million</td> <td>\$56 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Large Demonstration Project - Sustainable Energy</td> <td>\$25 million</td> <td>\$25 million</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Expenditure has been phased to reflect the expected achievement of agreed construction milestones.</p>	Project	2012-13	2013-14	Large Scale Demonstration Project - Carbon Capture and Storage:	\$31 million	\$56 million	Large Demonstration Project - Sustainable Energy	\$25 million	\$25 million	No further action is planned at this time.
Project	2012-13	2013-14										
Large Scale Demonstration Project - Carbon Capture and Storage:	\$31 million	\$56 million										
Large Demonstration Project - Sustainable Energy	\$25 million	\$25 million										
Recommendation 32 (Page 214)												
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.	Accept In Principle	<p>The Government reports expenditure against major asset investments (including existing and new projects) for the general government sector and major public non-financial corporations in <i>Budget Information Paper No 1 (BIP1)</i>.</p> <p>BIP1 provides a detailed examination of the Government's asset program and provides information on progress achieved against key strategic projects being undertaken.</p> <p>In addition to the information provided in BIP1, the Government has also devoted Appendix B of <i>Budget Paper 4, Statement of Finances</i>, to report on progress made on specific projects in <i>Meeting Our Transport Challenges</i>. The Government will continue to use this option to provide greater detail on key strategic projects and programs where appropriate.</p>	There is no further action planned at this time.									

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Recommendation 33 (Page 217)			
The Port of Melbourne Corporation disclose fully, the additional Channel Deepening Project budgeted costs identified after the publication of the Supplementary Environmental Effects Statement.	Accepted in Principle	<p>The Supplementary Environmental Effects Statement (SEES) on the Channel Deepening project was published in March 2007, and included an estimated project budget of \$763 million. Following receipt of all approvals, the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) announced on the 21st December 2007 in its press release that the final project budget was \$969 million.</p> <p>This revised budget took into account all direct costs, the cost impact of the outcomes of the Minister for Planning's assessment, environmental safeguards for dredging, environmental bay wide monitoring programs, provision for a \$100 million environmental bond, fuel, currency movements and contingency.</p> <p>Prior to the project receiving final approvals, the business case was updated to reflect the revised budget. Matters related to the economic justification for the project and procurement arrangements were considered by a Parliamentary Standing Committee (Finance and Public Administration), which tabled its Final Report on 11 September 2008.</p> <p>The Committee found that even after allowing for the December 2007 cost update and the inclusion of sunk costs (which are not usually required in cost benefit calculations) the benefit-cost ratio remains at approximately 2.0. This is still considered to be robust and sufficient to justify the Channel Deepening Project proceeding.</p> <p>As there has been no further project cost increases beyond the December 2007 update, the benefit-cost ratio remains unchanged and continues to support the Government's investment in the channel Deepening Project.</p>	No further action required.
Recommendation 34 (Page 219)			
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.	Under Review	On 15 July 2008, the Applicant (Blue Wedges Inc) was ordered by the Federal Court to pay the Respondents' (including the Port of Melbourne and the State of Victoria) costs of the application, including the costs of the motion, notice of which was given by the Applicant on 6 February 2008. The final costs awarded pursuant to that order have not been determined.	No further actions are planned at this time.

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Recommendation 35 (Page 232)			
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.	Accept in Principle	<p>The Department of Human Services is the lead agency responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring the <i>Victorian Alcohol Action Plan</i>.</p> <p>The Department of Justice was allocated \$3.4 million in 2008-09 to implement a range of <i>Victorian Alcohol Action Plan</i> initiatives, which will contribute to the achievement of the following outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Based Offender Supervision; • Protecting Community Rights; • Policing Services; and • Promoting and Protecting Consumer Interest. 	The Department of Justice will continue to internally monitor the implementation of its <i>Victorian Alcohol Action Plan</i> initiatives and to report to the Government on the implementation as required.
Recommendation 36 (Page 232)			
The Department of Justice should provide analysis of performance outcomes under each initiative of the Alcohol Action Plan in its Annual Report.	Accept in Principle	<p>The Department of Human Services is the lead agency responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring the <i>Victorian Alcohol Action Plan</i>.</p> <p>The outcomes achieved from the implementation of the <i>Victorian Alcohol Action Plan</i> will be measured based on the outcomes measurement framework detailed in the "<i>Victoria's Alcohol Plan 2008-2013 – Restoring the Balance</i>". The Government has committed to monitor progress against these outcome measures over the five-year period of the plan to 2013.</p>	The Department of Justice will report its <i>Victorian Alcohol Action Plan</i> achievements in its annual report commencing from 2008-09.
Recommendation 37 (Page 233)			
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.	Accept in Principle	<p>The Minister for Consumer Affairs introduced the <i>Liquor Control Reform Enforcement Bill 2008</i> in Parliament on 2 December 2008. The Bill will enable the establishment of the Liquor Licensing Compliance Directorate.</p> <p>In introducing the Bill, the Minister outlined the powers of the new Inspectors, and explained the role, goals, and objectives of the Directorate, which are consistent with those already indicated in the <i>Victorian Alcohol Action Plan</i>.</p> <p>The Bill is scheduled to be debated in March 2009.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Compliance Directorate will be established within Responsible Alcohol Victoria, a new business unit within the Department of Justice, and not within Consumer Affairs Victoria. The Liquor Licensing functions previously located within Consumer Affairs Victoria will be transferred to Responsible Alcohol Victoria, along with the associated output funding.</p>	<p>The new compliance directorate is expected to be operational by mid 2009.</p> <p>The Department of Justice will provide greater explanation of the Liquor Licensing Compliance activity and progress of the Liquor Licensing Compliance Directorate in the 2008-09 Annual Report.</p>
Recommendation 38 (Page 235)			

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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.	Accept in Principle	<p>The Department of Planning and Community Development, through Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, coordinate the development of the <i>Victorian Government Indigenous Affairs Report</i>, which is produced each year pursuant to the Premier's Circular on Diversity reporting. This report is tabled in Parliament each year.</p> <p>The report for the 2006-07 financial year marked a significant change from previous years. The major point of difference was that it was based on reporting against the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework (VIAF). Reporting against the VIAF allowed greater focus to be made on the progress achieved in the key Areas for Action that the government has identified as priority areas.</p> <p>Feedback received from Departments and Indigenous communities suggests the new structure of the Report was well supported.</p> <p>The 2007-08 Victorian Government Indigenous Affairs Report was tabled in Parliament on 3 February 2009.</p>	A Whole-of-Government Performance Management Framework for the VIAF is currently being developed by the Secretariat to the Ministerial Task Force on Aboriginal Affairs.
Recommendation 39 (Page 238)			
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.	Accept in Part	<p>The Department of Planning and Community Development is currently reviewing its output statements, which already includes performance measures relating to indigenous activities, as well as being aligned to other strategic directions.</p> <p>However, it would be inappropriate to amend the Department's output statements to specifically reflect the 21 Strategic Change Indicators in the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework (VIAF) as the VIAF is a Whole of Victorian Government framework and its implementation is a shared responsibility of various departments.</p> <p>Further, the Department of Planning and Community Development annually produce the <i>Whole of Government Report on Indigenous Affairs</i>. This report was reviewed in 2007 so that its architecture reflects the VIAF priorities and Strategic Change Indicators.</p>	<p>The <i>Whole of Government Performance Management Framework</i> report for the VIAF is currently being further developed by the Secretariat to the Ministerial Task Force on Aboriginal Affairs.</p> <p>Consideration is being given to work required to support alignment with COAG's Indigenous Reform agenda.</p> <p>Department of Planning and Community Development, in consultation with the Department of Treasury and Finance, will continue to review its output statements as part of the Budget process.</p>

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Recommendation 40 (Page 242)			
That the Department of Justice reinstate the individual measures associated with timeliness in relation to each of the major courts of Victoria.	Reject	To improve the efficiency of government reporting, the Department of Justice identified which performance measures were repetitious and, where possible, consolidated these for reporting in <i>Budget Paper No.3, Service Delivery</i> . The Department of Justice reports on the timeliness performance measures for each Court in the <i>Annual Reports of the Courts</i> and in the <i>Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services</i> .	The Department of Justice will continue to report individual Court timeliness performances measures and targets in the <i>Annual Reports of the Court</i> , but on a consolidated basis in <i>Budget Paper No.3, Service Delivery</i> .
Recommendation 41 (Page 242)			
That the Auditor-General undertake further performance audits of the Courts.	Not Applicable	The Department of Treasury and Finance has reviewed the recommendation the Committee has made to Victorian Auditor-General's Office and in our opinion this matter is operational, so it is appropriate that Victorian Auditor-General's Office address this independently.	Not applicable.
Recommendation 42 (Page 252)			
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.	Accept	Information relating to the Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model has been developed for the website and is currently under consideration.	Website content needs to be finalised. Target for completion is April 2009.

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Recommendation 43 (Page 252)			
<p>The Department of Transport provide the following information (e.g. in its annual report) relating to the unfolding of the level crossing safety program:</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(b) the safety improvement works that have been undertaken at each level crossing; and</p> <p>(c) a timeline covering the safety improvement works that are planned to be undertaken.</p>	<p>Accept in principle</p>	<p>The Victorian Rail Track Corporation (VicTrack) is the legal owner of the rail network and operates as a Victorian Government State Owned Enterprise (SOE).</p> <p>As a SOE, VicTrack produces its own annual report which is presented to Parliament. The VicTrack Annual Report includes a report on the Level and Pedestrian Crossing Upgrade Program as identified through the "ALCAM study". Furthermore, the document also reports on the Active Advanced Warning Signs program.</p> <p>VicTrack manages the Level and Pedestrian Crossing Upgrade Program and ALCAM on behalf of the Department of Transport.</p>	<p>The Department of Transport will facilitate the Victorian Railway Crossing Safety Steering Committee (VRCSSC) to initiate an Annual Report on its activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference; • Rail Crossing Priorities including associated risk mitigation treatments to be applied at each crossing in summary form and timelines covering the safety improvement works that are planned to be undertaken; • Other Rail Safety Activities; • Year Highlights / Achievements. • The Department of Transport will liaise with VicTrack to ensure that the VicTrack Annual Report includes a Table outlining the list of rail crossing upgrades commissioned annually.
Recommendation 44 (Page 257)			
<p>The Department of Planning and Community Development publish a schedule that discloses the expected timeframe for completion of each Precinct Structure Plan.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>The Department of Planning and Community Development has completed a Map and Schedule of the expected timeframes for the completion of the Precinct Structure Plans. These were published on the <i>Growth Areas Authority</i> website in December 2008.</p>	<p>No further action planned.</p>

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Recommendation 45 (Page 258)			
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.	Accept	<p>The Department of Treasury and Finance has been working with the Department of Planning and Community Development over the past six months to consolidate and refine the performance measures to reflect those activities that are within its control.</p> <p>This work has led to the development of '<i>KPI Progress towards Completion</i>' reporting, which includes as a key performance indicator the number of Precinct Structure Plans expected to be completed during the year.</p>	<i>KPI Progress Toward Completion</i> ' targets, including the number of Precinct Structure Plans expected to be completed in the coming year, will be available for inclusion in Government reports, including the Budget papers.
Recommendation 46 (Page 258)			
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.	Accept	<p>In the '<i>KPI Progress towards Completion</i>' report, established by the Department of Planning and Community Development, the following key performance indicators are used to measure the progress made towards the implementation of the Precinct Structure Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progressive Status of Precinct Structure Plans; • number of Residential Lots with a completed Precinct Structure Plan and Planning Scheme Amendment; and • number of Employment Hectares with a completed Precinct Structure Plan and Planning Scheme Amendment. <p>Additionally, in October 2008, the Department of Planning and Community Development issued a Consultation Draft of the "Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines". Included in this draft was a proposed range of goals and key performance measures. Responses to the Consultation Draft are due in February 2009.</p>	<p>The information in the '<i>KPI Progress Toward Completion</i>' report will be available for inclusion in the Department of Planning and Community Development's annual reporting and in the budget papers.</p> <p>The Precinct Structure Plan performance measures will be included in the <i>Growth Areas Authority Annual Report</i>.</p> <p>The Department of Planning and Community Development will use this feedback received from the Consultation Draft to develop the performance measures that will be applied to the Precinct Structure Planning Program.</p>

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Recommendation 47 (Page 261)			
The Department of Parliamentary Services should review the need for implementation of an archival/automated storage and retrieval process for video webcasting recordings.	Accept in Principle	The introduction of video webcasting of Parliamentary proceedings is scheduled to occur in a staged implementation over 2009-10 and 2010-11. Currently, video webcasting is in the planning stage, and the appropriate storage and retrieval facility will be one issue covered in planning considerations.	The planning for the implementation of video webcasting will continue in consultation with stakeholders.
Recommendation 48 (Page 262)			
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.	Accept	In the 2008-09 Budget, the State Government committed \$3.8 million asset and output funding for the live audio and video webcasting of all sessions of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, including question time. The video webcasting of the Legislative Assembly is scheduled to commence in 2009-10 and video webcasting of the Legislative Council is scheduled to commence 2010-11.	No further action planned at this time.
Recommendation 49 (Page 263)			
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.	Accept in Principle	Audio webcasting of Parliamentary proceedings has been recently introduced, and video webcasting is expected to commence by 2011. The Department of Parliamentary Services continuously considers the effectiveness of operations by seeking regular feedback from stake holders. One such avenue for collecting stake holder feedback on project effectiveness is through post implementation reviews.	The effectiveness of audio and, once implemented, video, webcasting will be examined on an ongoing basis after its implementation.