

Mr Paul Gibson MP
Chairperson
Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

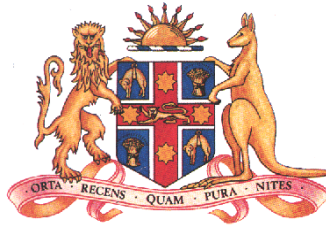
Dear Mr Gibson

I refer to the Public Accounts Committee's *Report on Examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audits Tabled November 2007 to March 2008 – Improving Efficiency of Irrigation Water Use on Farms, Police Rostering, Managing Departmental Amalgamations*, which was tabled on 24 June 2009.

Please find attached the Government's response to the Committee's Report.

Yours sincerely

Chris Raper
A/ Director General



NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

TO THE

**REPORT ON EXAMINATION OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE
AUDITS TABLED NOVEMBER 2007 TO MARCH 2008**

April 2010

1.1 Police Rostering

Recommendation 1: *The Committee recommends that the NSW Police Force implement best practice rosters throughout NSW by January 2010.*

The NSWPF has advised that a Fatigue Risk Management Framework (FRMF) was approved by the Commissioner's Executive Team on 8 December 2009. The FRMF underpins best practice rostering principles by providing employees and management with guidelines and strategies to identify practices and procedures that may cause a foreseeable fatigue related hazard.

Consistent with these principles, the NSW Police Force introduced a mandatory ten hour break between shifts, an increase from the current eight hours.

Best practice rostering principles also include the need to deploy police resources to meet community needs. First Response Policing Agreements for all Local Area Commands have recently been reviewed by the Deputy Commissioner, Field Operations, to ensure that deployment more closely meets demand. This resulted in the alteration of a number of First Response Policing Agreements to increase the number of officers available for busy periods and better use of short shift patterns to match demand patterns.

1.2 Managing Departmental Amalgamations

Recommendation 2: *The Committee recommends that formal evaluations of departmental amalgamations be routinely carried out and that the results of the evaluations be tabled in Parliament.*

The position of the Public Accounts Committee that the public has an interest in knowing whether the costs and disruptions of departmental amalgamations result in enduring benefits is acknowledged, and is supported in principle. However instituting a mandatory requirement to prepare and table evaluations of agency amalgamations before Parliament through inclusion in the annual reports of departments for three years as previously recommended by the Auditor General, presents a significant additional reporting burden for Government agencies, to which minimal "value add" or benefit can be credited.

Instead, and as previously advised, existing Government performance reporting regimes can and should be utilised, including particularly the State Plan which provides a 10 year vision for strengthening NSW, and prioritising Government effort in delivering "the best possible services to the people of NSW",

The State Plan details the Government's priorities, is already being used to drive better performance across the public sector in NSW, and can similarly be utilised by members of both Parliament and the public to review Government performance, including, where relevant, the outcomes and benefits of any agency amalgamations. Significant effort is being taken this year to ensure public reporting is improved, including the launch of a new State Plan interactive website.

As members of the Public Accounts Committee would be aware, the revised State Plan is supported by a new Minister with specific responsibility for the State Plan. The Plan has 90 targets which underpin 44 high level service delivery priorities. Individual Ministers have specific responsibility for implementing initiatives to meet these targets, and relevant departmental Directors General and agency Chief Executives are directly accountable, through their annual performance reviews, for achieving State Plan results. These outcomes are reported publically on the State Plan website.

In addition to the above, and having regard to the current Government reform agenda involving the amalgamation of agencies into principal Departments / cluster arrangements, the Better Services and Value Taskforce provides oversight of this reform. Departments also report on structural or organisational changes in their respective Annual Reports.