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Mr Russell D Grove  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

- 9 MAR 2010

Dear Mr Grove

In reply to your correspondence of 24 September 2009 to the former Premier, the Hon Nathan Rees MP, I am pleased to provide the NSW Government's response to Report No. 2/54 of the Public Bodies Review Committee, *Report on an Inquiry into Environmental Impact Reporting in the NSW Public Sector*. This response encompasses the advice sought from respective Ministers on specific recommendations contained within Report 2/54.

A detailed response to each of the seven recommendations is provided at Attachment 1.

Should you require any further information please contact Ian Hunter, Assistant Director, Infrastructure, Environment and Economic Development Branch, Department of Premier and Cabinet on 9228 3498.

Yours sincerely



**Kristina Keneally MP**  
Premier

	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
1	That application of all elements of the Sustainability Policy (the Policy) be extended to all public sector agencies.	<p><b>Partially supported.</b></p> <p>At present the Sustainability Policy applies to inner budget sector agencies only. The Government will consider the sector wide application of the Sustainability Policy following its scheduled review in 2011.</p> <p>It is noted that aspects of the Policy (i.e. fleet, waste reduction and purchasing) already apply to all NSW Government agencies.</p>
2	That all public sector agencies report to Parliament, as part of their annual report, on their environmental performance under the Sustainability Policy.	<p><b>Not supported.</b></p> <p>It is considered that the existing framework for environmental performance by agencies is sufficient.</p> <p>It is noted that the reporting requirements under the Sustainability Policy require the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) to report annually to the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment on the overall performance of the Policy.</p> <p>DECCW is also required to prepare a whole of Government sustainability report every three years summarising environmental performance at an agency level.</p> <p>In addition most agencies are already required to report waste information in their annual report.</p>
3	That the Government establish a program to support the implementation of environmental management systems (EMS) within public bodies (or similar systems that are integrated into business management systems) to measure and review performance.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>The Government supports the principles and outcomes promoted by an EMS, which provides a systematic framework to help an organisation to achieve its environmental goals.</p> <p>DECCW has established its Sustainability Advantage Program, which is being used by some Government agencies. The Sustainability Advantage Program is similar to an EMS in that it supports large and medium size organisations in achieving systemic improvements to their environmental management practices.</p> <p>Agencies participating in the Sustainability Advantage Program work closely with</p>



		DECCW to integrate sustainability into their operations and facilitate appropriate business planning and system development to address sustainability issues.
4	That environmental performance of agencies be independently audited	<p><b>Not supported.</b></p> <p>As noted under Recommendation 2, DECCW reports annually to the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment on the overall performance of the Policy and is also required to prepare a whole of Government sustainability report every three years summarising environmental performance at an agency level.</p>
5	That the NSW Audit Office be empowered to audit environmental performance information contained in public sector annual reports.	<p><b>Not supported.</b></p> <p>Environmental performance is not included in the scope of annual report under the Annual Report Act (1985).</p> <p>As detailed in response to Recommendation 2 the Government considers that the existing framework for requiring environmental performance information from agencies is sufficient.</p> <p>Imposing further environmental reporting requirements on agencies would be inconsistent with the Government's decision to reduce annual reporting requirements.</p>
6	That Government initiate an independent review of the effectiveness of the NSW Government Sustainability Policy after three years of its operation.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>The Government considers there is merit in reviewing the effectiveness of the Sustainability Policy after three years of its operation. This timeframe will provide sufficient data collection to enable a meaningful assessment of its specific targets.</p>
7	That this review (Recommendation 6) include an assessment of the Policy against the principles in the Global Reporting Initiative.	<p><b>Supported.</b></p> <p>The review of the Sustainability Policy will include an assessment against the principles in the Global Reporting Initiative.</p>