



Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Local Government audit update — March 2021

Local Government reports currently in progress

Topic	Objective(s)	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
Managing and enforcing infringements	<p>To determine whether the rollout of the new infringement system was effective and cost efficient.</p> <p><i>*This report will not include Local Councils but draws on the work of the Fines Reform Advisory Board who consulted with them about revenue lost through inability to collect fines revenue through Fines Victoria</i></p>	In Progress	May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Justice and Community Safety Fines Victoria 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/managing-and-enforcing-infringements
Supplying and using alternative water sources	To assess whether responsible agencies are increasing the use of alternative water sources to meet future demand.	In progress	Nov 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Environmental Protection Authority Victoria Barwon Water City of Greater Geelong 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/supply-and-use-alternative-urban-water-sources

Planned Local Government reports

Topic	Overview	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
Fraud control over local government grants	To determine whether fraud and corruption controls over grants in local government are well designed and operating as intended.	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hume City Council Knox City Council Loddon Shire Council Southern Grampians Shire Council West Wimmera Shire Council 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/fraud-control-over-grants-local-government
Effectiveness of the Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Program	To determine whether the Enhanced Maternal and Child Health (EMCH) Program leads to improved access, participation, and outcomes for vulnerable children and their families targeted by the program.	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health and Human Services Department of Education and Training Municipal Association of Victoria City of Casey Hobsons Bay City Council Mildura Rural City Council South Gippsland Shire Council Yarra City Council 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/effectiveness-enhanced-maternal-and-child-health-program
Managing the impact of deer	To determine the extent to which invasive deer species are managed to protect biodiversity values.	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alpine Shire Council Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Game Management Authority Mansfield Shire Council Murrindindi Shire Council Parks Victoria 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/managing-impact-deer

OFFICIAL

Topic	Overview	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
Implementing Plan Melbourne 2017-50	To determine whether actions to implement Plan Melbourne 2017–50 are sustained and coordinated at a state-wide, regional, and local level.	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Victorian Planning Authority Maroondah City Council Moonee Valley City Council 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/implementing-plan-melbourne-2017-50
Council waste management services	To determine whether councils' waste management services are achieving value for money.	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballarat City Council Bayside City Council Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Grampians Central West Waste and Resource Recovery Group Greater Dandenong City Council Melbourne City Council Metropolitan Waste Resource and Recovery Group Sustainability Victoria 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/delivering-local-government-services-waste-management-services
Fraud and corruption risk in local government procurement	To determine whether fraud and corruption controls over local government procurement are well-designed and operate as intended.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banyule City Council Hepburn Shire Council Municipal Association of Victoria Mitchell Shire Council Nillumbik Shire Council Wodonga Regional City Council 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/fraud-and-corruption-risk-local-government-procurement
Developing Fishermans Bend	To determine whether planning and early development of Fishermans Bend supports the delivery of the development's objectives.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Development Victoria 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/developing-fishermans-bend

OFFICIAL

Topic	Overview	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Melbourne City Council Port Phillip City Council 	
Regulation of council building approvals in local government	To determine whether council regulation of building activity ensures that safety and amenity requirements are met and council assets are protected.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manningham City Council Monash City Council Surf Coast Shire Council Wangaratta Rural City Council Wyndham City Council 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/regulation-council-building-approvals-local-government
Hazardous waste management	To determine whether responsible agencies' control and regulation of hazardous waste has reduced inappropriate disposal.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Environment Protection Authority Victoria Maribyrnong City Council Metropolitan Waste Resource Recovery Group Sustainability Victoria Whittlesea City Council WorkSafe Victoria 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/hazardous-waste-management-0
Managing land-use buffers	To determine whether the management of land-use buffers is promoting public health, safety and liveability.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Environment Protection Authority Victoria A selection of councils in growth corridors 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/managing-land-use-buffers

Topic	Overview	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
Food safety regulation in local government	To determine whether councils' administration of food safety regulation ensures legislative compliance and supports public health.	Planned	2023-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health and Human Services A selection of local councils 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/food-safety-regulation-local-government

Local Government reports tabled within the previous 6 months

Topic	Overview	Status	Tabled	Agency(ies)	Link
Maintaining local roads	To determine whether councils are achieving value for money in maintaining their local roads.	Completed	17 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gannawarra Shire Council Greater Bendigo City Council Maribyrnong City Council 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/maintaining-local-roads

Topic	Overview	Status	Tabled	Agency(ies)	Link
	We also developed a detailed dashboard for the public and individual reports for each one of the 79 councils comparing their results to their cohort and state averages.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Grampians Shire Council Yarra Ranges Shire Council 	
Results of 2019–20 audits: Local government	<p>This report will provide Parliament with an outline of the results of our financial audits of the entities within the sector and our observations for the year ended 30 June 2020.</p> <p>Along with this report, we also published a LG data dashboard – making publicly available all the data used to generate our analysis, benchmarking information and financial sustainability assessments.</p>	Completed	17 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Councils 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/results-2019-20-audits-local-government
Sexual harassment in local government	To determine whether local government authorities provide workplaces free from sexual harassment.	Completed	9 December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ararat Shire Council Corangamite Shire Council Frankston City Council Latrobe Rural City Moreland City Council 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/sexual-harassment-local-government

Topic	Overview	Status	Tabled	Agency(ies)	Link
Early years management in Victorian sessional kindergartens	To determine whether the Department of Education and Training (DET) has supported organisations managing sessional kindergartens to meet the outcomes of the <i>Early Years Management Policy Framework</i> .	Completed	15 October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education and Training Glen Eira City Council Early Childhood Management Services Inc Glen Eira Kindergarten Association Greater Shepparton City Council Goulburn Region Pre-School Association Inc City of Whittlesea TRY Australia Children's Services Goodstart Early Learning Ltd 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/early-years-management-victorian-sessional-kindergartens
Reducing bushfire risk	To assess whether responsible agencies are effectively working together to reduce Victoria's bushfire risk.	Completed	14 October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Parks Victoria Country Fire Authority Department of Justice and Community Safety Energy Safe Victoria Murrindindi Shire Council City of Whittlesea East Gippsland Shire Council 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/reducing-bushfire-risks
Victoria's Homelessness Response	To examine the implementation of key elements of the state government's \$45 million HRSAP. <i>*This report does not scope Local Councils but concerns areas affecting local councils regarding Homelessness.</i>	Completed	17 September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health and Human Services Port Phillip City Council Other local councils 	https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/victorias-homelessness-response?section=33621--4-performance-monitoring&show-sections=1#33621--4-performance-monitoring

Other Integrity and Local Government Related Bodies update — March 2021

Local Government reports currently in progress

Topic	Overview	Status	Proposed Publishing	Link
Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission				
Operation Sandon	IBAC held public hearings during 2019 and 2020 into allegations of serious corrupt conduct in relation to planning and property development decisions at the City of Casey council.	In Progress	To be advised	https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/investigating-corruption/IBAC-examinations/operation-sandon
Victorian Ombudsman				
Investigation launched into how councils are responding to ratepayers in financial hardship	In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Victorian Ombudsman has begun investigating how Victoria's 79 local councils are responding to ratepayers in financial hardship. The investigation will focus on assistance for residential ratepayers in relation to their primary residence, as well as farmers.	In Progress	To be advised	https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/our-impact/news/investigation/

Local Government reports prepared within the previous 6 months

Topic	Overview	Status	Published	Link
Victorian Local Government and Minister for Local Government				
Victorian Local Government Rating System Review	The Victorian Government is conducted a full review into the Victorian Local Government Rating System. The report provided a list of 56 recommendation to be considered for the Victorian Local Government Rating System.	Completed	December 2020	https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/council-governance/victorian-local-government-rating-system-review https://engage.vic.gov.au/rating-review

Victorian Ombudsman				
<p>Investigation into the detention and treatment of public housing residents arising from a COVID-19 'hard lockdown' in July 2020</p> <p>(Included consultation from City of Melbourne and City of Moonee Valley councils over the course of investigations)</p>	<p>The Ombudsman's investigation found that the detention of people at 33 Alfred St, North Melbourne appeared to contravene <i>Charter of Human rights</i> and that DHHS failed to provide people there timely information about their detention.</p> <p>The Ombudsman's recommendations included that Victorian Government should apologise for the harm or distress caused by immediate lockdown and amend the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to include greater safeguards wound use of emergency detention powers, and that DHHS should ensure appropriate COVID-19 outbreak prevention, preparation and response measures are in place for other sensitive accommodation settings.</p>	Completed	December 2020	https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/our-impact/investigation-reports/investigation-into-the-detention-and-treatment-of-public-housing-residents-arising-from-a-covid-19-hard-lockdown-in-july-2020/#full-report
<p>Investigation into credit card use at Warrnambool City Council</p>	<p>The conclusion of this investigation is that while there is evidence of lax practises by staff and poor judgement by some in senior management, credit card misuse was not widespread. Serious misuse was limited to one individual, although the level of abuse was greater than had been exposed or admitted to, in some instances also suggesting a deliberate intention to deceive.</p>	Completed	October 2020	https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/our-impact/investigation-reports/investigation-into-corporate-credit-card-misuse-at-warrnambool-city-council/
<p>Investigation into review of parking fines by the City of Melbourne</p>	<p>It is estimated over 1,200 motorists were affected by a PayStay mistake, which the council could easily have checked when the driver requested a review. These mistakes were caused when number 0 and letter O were virtually indistinguishable on registration plates, and drivers would not be aware they had made an error.</p>	Completed	September 2020	https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/our-impact/investigation-reports/investigation-into-review-of-parking-fines-by-the-city-of-melbourne/#letter-to-the-legislative-council-and-the-legislative-assembly

The investigation concludes the key issue in the investigation was not about particular of codes of conduct, but problematic attitudes and culture which appear to have been generated or endorsed by senior management of the Council.

Local Government Inspectorate

Councillor expenses and allowances: equitable treatment and enhanced integrity

An Inspectorate project reviewing support provided to elected councillors has built a picture of the varied approaches to councillor resources and expense reimbursement procedures across the state. The project assessed what support is provided to councillors, levels of satisfaction with this support and what improvements could be made in relation to support/resources.

The project also examined what kinds of expenses are being claimed and how expenses policies are working in practice with a view to recommending improvements to the expenses process to better meet community expectations.

Completed September 2020

<https://www.lgi.vic.gov.au/councillor-expenses-and-allowances-equitable-treatment-and-enhanced-integrity>

Active Council governance matters as at date:

Topic	Councils and timeline	Link
Long-term Government appointed administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Gippsland Shire Council (21 June 2019 until the next election for the council in October 2021) • Casey City Council (14 May 2020 to October 2024) • Whittlesea City Council (19 June 2020 to October 2024) 	<p>https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/council-governance/commission-of-inquiry-into-south-gippsland-shire-council2</p> <p>https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/council-governance/independent-reports</p> <p>https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/council-governance/independent-reports</p>

Interstate Audits update—March 2021

Local Government reports currently in progress and planned

Topic	Objective(s)	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
New South Wales					
Business continuity and disaster recovery planning	This audit will examine the effectiveness of business continuity planning processes in a selection of local councils in preparing these organisations for recent emergency events.	Planned	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A selection of local councils 	https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/business-continuity-and-disaster-recovery-planning
Council annual charges	This audit could examine selected common charges across a number of councils to understand what is driving the variability in charges for the common services, that vary greatly between councils.	Planned	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A selection of local councils 	https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/council-annual-charges
Local Government 2020	This report will bring together findings and recommendations from our 2019–20 financial audits of local councils and will comment on financial reporting and sustainability, internal controls and governance, and areas of interest that are in focus during the conduct of our audits.	Planned	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A selection of local councils 	https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/local-government-2020

Topic	Objective(s)	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
Compliance review: Cybersecurity	In February 2019 the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation launched the NSW Cyber Security Policy to ensure all NSW Government Departments and Public Service Agencies are managing cyber security risks to their information and systems. The policy mandates a number of requirements that are a minimum that all agencies must implement. In addition, agencies must assess their level of cyber maturity. This audit will examine whether agencies are complying with the Policy.	Planned	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All NSW Government Departments and Public Service Agencies 	https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/compliance-review-cybersecurity
Queensland					
Local government entities: 2020	This audit will summarise the results of our financial audits of the Queensland councils and the related entities they control that produced financial statements at 30 June.	In Progress	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A selection of local councils 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program
Effectiveness of Local Government Audit committees	This audit will assess the effectiveness of audit committees in local governments.	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A selection of local councils 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program
Local government entities: 2021	This audit will summarise the results of our financial audits of the Queensland councils and the related entities they control that produced financial statements at 30 June	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A selection of local councils 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program
Commonwealth Games Legacy	This audit will assess whether the state has realised the intended legacy benefits from the Commonwealth Games.	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program

Topic	Objective(s)	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A selection of local councils 	
Queensland Floods Commission of Enquiry	This audit will assess whether Queensland is better able to prevent and prepare for floods following the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry.	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy • Department of Environment and Science • Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning • Queensland Reconstruction Authority • A selection of local councils 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program
Managing conflicts of interest in Local Government	This audit will assess how effectively councils manage and respond to conflicts of interest.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A selection of local councils 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program
Maintaining strong and prosperous regions	This audit will assess the Queensland Government's effectiveness in progressing the goals for strong and prosperous regions in its Queensland Plan.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs • Selection of local councils 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program
Transport service contracts	This audit will assess whether transport service contracts are managed effectively to meet the government's transport objectives, maximise value for money and meet community needs.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Transport and Main Roads • A selection of local councils 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program
Local government entities: 2022	This audit will summarise the results of our financial audits of the Queensland councils and the related entities they control that produced financial statements at 30 June.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A selection of local councils 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program

Topic	Objective(s)	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
Managing Invasive species	This audit will assess how effectively the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is managing invasive species.	Planned	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Department of Environment and Science Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy Selection of local councils 	https://www.gao.qld.gov.au/audit-program
Western Australia					
DLGSC's regulation and support of local government	This audit will assess whether the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries effectively regulates and supports local government entities.	In Progress	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection of local councils 	https://audit.wa.gov.au/audit-in-g-in-wa/audit-program/
Audit Results Report – Annual 2019-20 Financial Audits of Local Government Entities	This report will summarise the results of annual audits of local government entities' annual financial reports, and their compliance with applicable legislation for the financial year ending 30 June 2020.	In Progress	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 112 local government entities 	https://audit.wa.gov.au/audit-in-g-in-wa/audit-program/
Safe and Viable cycling in the Perth and Peel region	The objective of the audit is to assess the effectiveness of LG entities in improving the Perth and Peel cycling network and follow-up recommendations from our 2015 performance audit <i>Safe and Viable Cycling in the Perth Metropolitan Area</i> .	In Progress	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government entities Department of Transport (DoT) 	https://audit.wa.gov.au/audit-in-g-in-wa/audit-program/
State of Cyber security in local government entities	The objective of this audit is to determine if local government entities are effectively managing cyber security.	In Progress	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government entities 	https://audit.wa.gov.au/audit-in-g-in-wa/audit-program/
Tasmania					

Topic	Objective(s)	Status	Proposed Tabling	Agency(ies)	Link
Managing landfills	<p>This audit will examine whether the Environmental Protection Authority's (EPA) current regulatory approach is appropriately administered, is being complied with and has been effective in providing assurance that landfills are not leading to adverse human health and environmental impacts, both currently and for future generations.</p> <p>This audit will examine the activities of the EPA and a sample of councils and joint authorities that own and operate landfills</p>	Planned	2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Protection Authority Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment Selected Councils and Joint Authorities 	https://www.audit.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Plan-of-Work-2019-20.pdf
Council general manager recruitment, appointment and performance assessment	This audit will assess recruitment processes, contractual and remuneration arrangements and performance assessment for council general managers.	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A selection of local councils 	https://www.audit.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Plan-of-Work-2020-21.pdf
Council Procurement - Report 3	<p>This audit will assess whether procurement of goods and services by councils is being undertaken in accordance with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2015</i> Council's Code for Tenders and Contracts <p>Council's internal policies, procedures and manuals</p>	Planned	2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A selection of local councils 	https://www.audit.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Plan-of-Work-2020-21.pdf

Local Government reports tabled within the previous 3 months

Topic	Overview	Status	Tabled	Agency(ies)	Link
New South Wales					
Procurement management in Local Government	<p>This audit assessed how effectively procurement is managed in a sample of six councils across metropolitan, regional and rural New South Wales. The audit found all six councils had procurement management policies and procedures that were consistent with the legislative requirements for sourcing and assessing tender offers.</p> <p>Audit also found that there were opportunities for councils to improve procurement management to mitigate risks to transparency, accountability and value for money as there were common gaps found in councils' procurement management. These gaps expose risks to councils' ability to demonstrate their procurements are justified, well managed, delivering to expectations, and achieving value for money.</p>	Completed	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumberland City Council • Georges River Council • Lockhart Shire Council • Tweed Shire Council • Waverley Council • Wollongong City Council 	https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/procurement-management-in-local-government
Western Australia					
COVID-19 Relief Fund	This audit assessed whether Lotterywest and the Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries implemented effective governance and assessment arrangements for Phase 1 of the COVID-19 Relief Fund.	Completed	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lotteries Commission (Lotterywest) • Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) 	https://audit.wa.gov.au/reports-and-publications/reports/covid-19-relief-fund/

Topic	Overview	Status	Tabled	Agency(ies)	Link
	<p>The audit found the application assessment, approval and payment arrangements were sound, and were followed by Lotterywest and DLGSC and despite the Fund being implemented quickly, there was a strong focus on establishing sound governance and risk management arrangements. However, audit found that more attention could have been given by Lotterywest to defining the Phase 1 expected outcomes. For future phases of the Fund, Lotterywest could also improve how it manages conflicts of interest and both entities should ensure that all key decisions are recorded appropriately.</p>				
Tasmania					
Procurement in Local Government.	<p>The objective of the audit was to form reasonable assurance on three council's compliance with their procurement and reporting obligations under their respective code, the LGA and LGR (the requirements).</p> <p>Two of the three councils obtained a qualified opinion and the third obtained an adverse opinion.</p>	Completed	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break O'Day Council • Derwent Valley Council • Glamorgan Spring Bay Council 	https://www.audit.tas.gov.au/publication/procurement-in-local-government/