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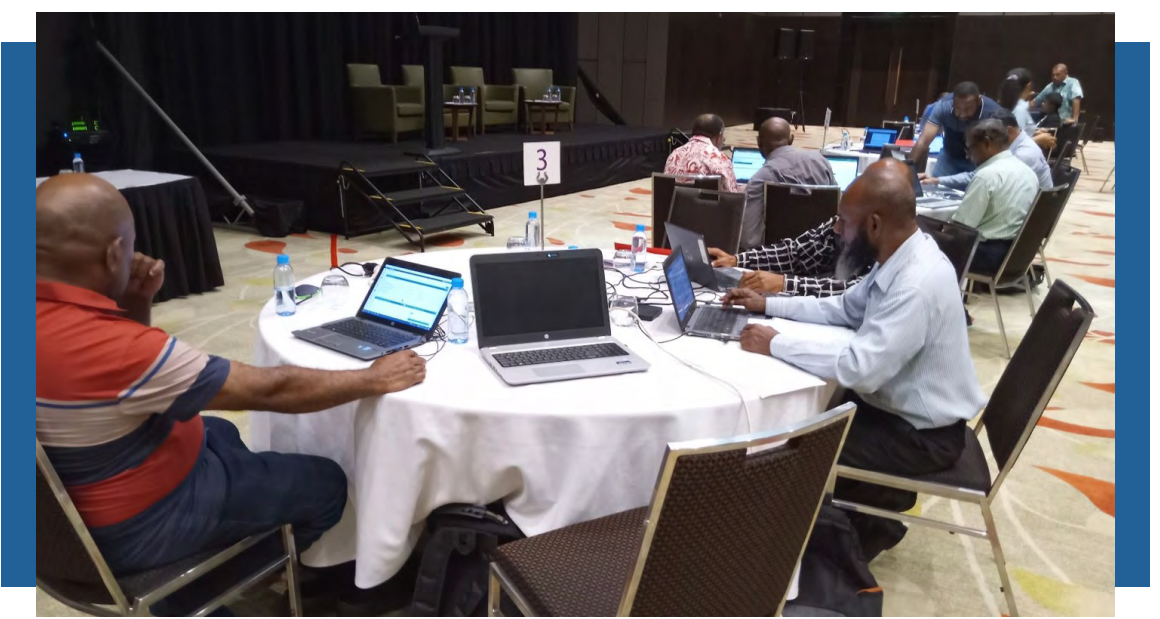
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## SAI Papua New Guinea auditors shift from manual to electronic auditing

The burden of carrying stacks of papers for auditing and reporting will soon be a thing of the past now that staff from the Auditor-General’s Office of Papua New Guinea (AGO) are preparing to implement TeamMate+ Audit web-based audit management software.

AGO Champions have customised the software to suit Papua New Guinea’s business environment.

Auditors were amazed when taught how to manage the new paperless software in a workshop between 11 and 14 April 2023. This first phase of the training introduced auditors to the application and its methodology on planning. The second phase will continue this month and cover the methodology on review and reporting.



AGO auditors participating in the weeklong session that introduced them to the TeamMate+ Audit application with hands on navigation activities and applying methodology learnt in the cloud-based system



Statutory bodies and the Provincial and Local Level Governments Audit Division of AGO had been using the earlier Teammate Administration Module version since 2017. After migrating to TeamMate+ Audit in April 2022 and a progressive implementation trial, the AGO was impressed with the system's first reports.

AGO staff now have the flexibility to access the software wherever they have an internet connection.

## First-time auditors reflect on their report tabling

Audit Manager Awanthini Danawansa and Graduate Analyst Jack Conlan from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) reflect on their challenges and successes during their very first performance audit.

On 17 May the VAGO Health team, led by Elsie Alcordo, tabled their [Supporting Sexual and Reproductive Health](#) performance audit.

For Awanthini and Jack, this represented a lot of 'firsts'. First performance audit, first parliamentary report, first time working together! They came into the engagement with open minds, eager to learn and do their best. When asked to reflect, they described it as a special and memorable experience.

Sexual and reproductive health is an important topic that affects almost all Victorian women at some point in their lives, and there has been strong interest in the report. Awanthini and Jack have been especially encouraged by feedback from auditees, colleagues and other stakeholders.

The audit was well received by the audited agencies, who commended the team for a fair and balanced report and for their professional and transparent approach. In another 'first', Awanthini and Jack also briefed several members of parliament (MPs), who were very interested in the findings and asked a range of questions.

Awanthini and Jack responded to questions about the process and their experiences:



Jack Conlan and Awanthini Danawansa

### How do you rate the success of an audit?

AD: When I think of what I want to achieve out of an audit, I want the report to make a difference. This starts with the auditees accepting our recommendations and committing to address our findings. I also consider having a collaborative and productive relationship with all auditees as a sign of success. We achieved all of these, so in my opinion our first audit was an impactful and successful one.

AD & JC: A strong foundation and mentorship are critical to the successful performance of first-time auditors. We had a very knowledgeable and supportive mentor in our Engagement Leader, Elsie Alcordo. Elsie guided us every step of the way and provided valuable insights. We especially valued Elsie's positive feedback, encouragement and assurance that she 'had our back'. She was always championing our abilities and encouraging us to approach new tasks with confidence.



## **Tell us more about your individual roles.**

AD: As the audit manager I wanted this engagement to be characterised by strong and open relationships with auditees. From the start, I was on the phone with each auditee, building rapport and establishing lines of communication. During the audit I was always transparent about what we were expecting from auditees and about our findings, including negative ones. Regular and open communication was key to the good stakeholder relationships we developed and the auditees have since thanked us for our partnership approach.

JC: I was a very new graduate and already assigned to another audit when I was asked to also jump on this audit. Joining Awanthini's team was a crash-course in prioritisation and time-management! I was excited to be working on this audit too – we were reviewing Victoria's first Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan, and there was such potential for us to add value. I appreciated Awanthini's collaborative approach. It never felt like I was 'just a grad' and I can honestly say that I contributed to the final report in a meaningful way. Our audit was tabled at a time when its findings could be used to supplement the new 2022–2030 Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan. It's rewarding to know that our recommendations have been accepted as part of that plan.

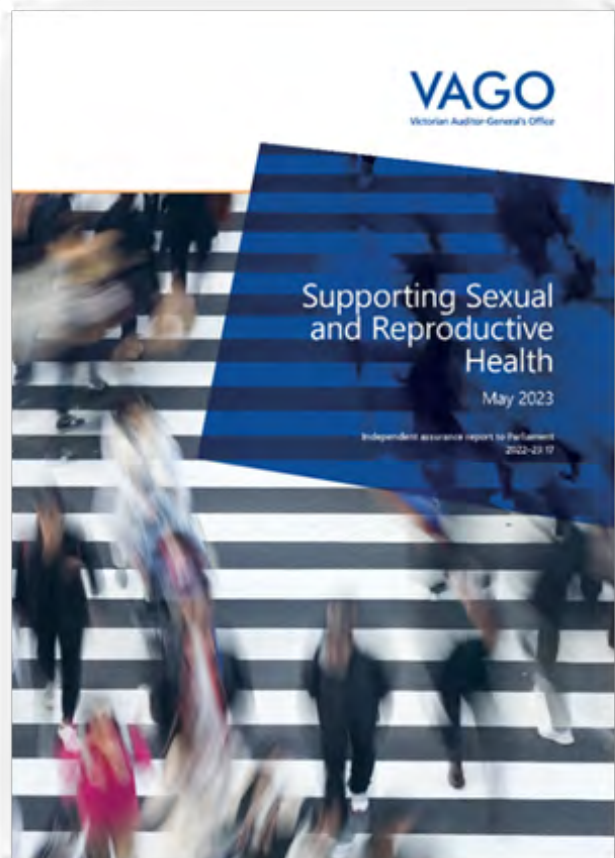
## **What challenges did you face?**

JC: One of the key challenges for me was joining the audit at quite a late stage. When I had my first meeting with Awanthini the End of Conduct Brief was just about to go out to all the auditees. But in a way it was a blessing that the brief had been written, since it covered the audit context, background and major findings for each of the auditees.

Awanthini also provided me with a selection of key documents to help fill out my understanding of the audit context and how the team had reached their conclusions. Given the bulk of the analysis work had been completed by this point, we felt it was appropriate to target my research in this way so that I could start contributing to the report writing as quickly as possible.

## **What are you most proud of?**

AD & JC: At VAGO we talk a lot about making a difference, and we're proud of producing a report that will help the agencies improve in this area. In our briefings with the Minister and MPs they all were extremely interested. They thanked us for looking into this important aspect of healthcare, which is often stigmatised, with respect and commitment. And having such a positive first audit experience has strengthened our confidence about working on more audits in the future.





## SAI Australia and the ACT Audit Office host IMPACT Conference 2023

The International Meeting of Performance Audit Critical Thinkers (IMPACT) Conference, an initiative of the Australasian Council of Auditors General (ACAG), is intended as a biennial professional conference for performance auditors. The event brings together auditors to discuss emerging issues and best practices in performance audit with industry experts, practitioners and those interested in government accountability.

The 2023 Conference, hosted by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) and the Australian Capital Territory Audit Office (ACT AO), was the third since its inception in 2016, and the first since the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 230 international and Australian attendees gathered for the 2023 conference in Canberra, Australia from 19 to 20 April 2023.

The theme of this year's conference was 'The Auditor of the Future' with two sub themes — 'technology as a tool' and 'technology and the impact on the auditor'. The conference featured two full days of presentations, breakout sessions and networking opportunities.

### Conference highlights

Senator the Honourable Katy Gallagher, the Australian Minister for Finance, Minister for Women and Minister for the Public Service, addressed conference attendees as a keynote speaker. Minister Gallagher highlighted the importance of auditing as a profession and reminded those in attendance of the critical role that auditors play in providing Parliament, and the public which it serves, assurances that public sector entities are providing services and using public money in accordance with the Parliament's intent.

The ANAO and the ACT AO were pleased to host several representatives from the PASAI region including the Controller and Auditor-General of New Zealand, John Ryan; Auditor-General of Papua New Guinea, Gordon Kega; Controller and Auditor-General of Samoa, Fuimaono Camillo Afele; and auditors from SAIs Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

Fuimaono Camilo Afele, Controller and Auditor-General of Samoa, presenting 'Ambitions of the Samoa Audit Office in Assuring a Sustainable Future for Samoa'

Mr Afele led a breakout session on environmental auditing and sustainability alongside Dr Wendy Craik AM FTSE, One Basin Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Chair. The breakout session featured a discussion on the role of audit institutions in responding to the global focus on environmental protection and climate change, particularly through the lens of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).





Mr Afele emphasised the valuable contributions audit institutions can make to national efforts to track the progress, monitor implementation and identify improvement opportunities across the full set of SDGs. For Samoa in particular, this means ensuring a sustainable future. He also discussed the need for strong legislative frameworks to enable independent auditing across the breadth of the audit activities.



John Ryan, Controller and Auditor-General of New Zealand and Secretary-General of PASAI, during the panel discussion 'Ethical and integrity challenges in government'

Mr Ryan participated in a panel discussing ethical and integrity challenges in government alongside Daniele T Bird, Partner at EY Australia; and Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM, Secretary for Public Sector Reform, Australia. The panel provided insights into the role of the auditor to scrutinise ethics and integrity in the delivery of government programmes.

Auditors are now looking beyond technical compliance and towards operating within the intent of established rules and frameworks, alongside community expectations of integrity.

The conference also featured the following outstanding presentations:

- Dr Agus Joko Pramono, Vice Chairperson, Audit Board of Indonesia, presented on the challenges of attracting the auditor of the future, focusing on the skills audit professionals will need in a rapidly changing digital environment.
- Tina Kim, Deputy Comptroller for State Government Accountability for New York, spoke about the rise of artificial intelligence. Ms Kim discussed how auditors in a rapidly changing technology environment will remain a critical component of providing oversight and accountability of public sector performance and how auditors can use technology to their advantage.
- Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, delivered a presentation on audit impact and the relationship with Parliament. Recognising that to have impact our audit work needs to continue to be a source of useful information to the Parliament.



- Shri Girish Chandra Murmu, Comptroller and Auditor General of India, provided conference attendees with an overview of the impact of audit findings in India, including in relation to citizen-centric services, public transportation and disaster management.

You can view and download these presentations from the ANAO's [IMPACT 2023 Conference](#) page.

A formal dinner on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin provided conference attendees an opportunity to network, to share knowledge and experiences and to hear from Li Cunxin<sup>1</sup>, who told his inspiring story of courage and determination.

The ACAG Performance Audit Awards were also presented at the dinner. These awards recognise outstanding performance audits in the categories of communication, excellence and innovation. The winners of the 2023 awards were:

- Communication: [Public Trustee's Administration of Trusts and Deceased Estates](#) – Office of the Auditor General for Western Australia (see article below)
- Excellence: [Delivering Social Housing Services](#) – Queensland Audit Office
- Innovation: [Managing Body Worn Cameras](#) – Victorian Auditor-General's Office

## IMPACT 2025

Western Australia will host the next IMPACT Conference in 2025. ACAG looks forward to this opportunity to meet again, share insights and strengthen its relationships.



Auditors general and senior audit staff from around Australia and the Pacific region and, in red, Ha Thi My Dzung, Deputy Auditor General, State Audit Office of Vietnam

## OAG WA wins Communication Award

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) for Western Australia was pleased to win the Communication Award at the annual ACAG Performance Audit Awards for the [Public Trustee's Administration of Trusts and Deceased Estates](#) report.

The award was recognition of the audit team's ability to distil large amounts of information into clear messages that were meaningful to members of Parliament and the Public Trustee's clients, many of whom may struggle to interpret technical language.

<sup>1</sup> Autobiographer of the award-winning book, Mao's Last Dancer – see [www.licunxin.com](http://www.licunxin.com).





One of the largest challenges the team faced was drawing Parliament’s attention to the issues caused through the Public Trustee’s need to self-fund, without commenting on Government policy. The team presented it in a flat and factual approach, where possible linking the findings to anonymised case studies to demonstrate the impact the Public Trustee’s implementation of fees and charges was having on its vulnerable clients.

Throughout the report multiple case studies and graphics humanise the findings and highlight the real-world impact of what the team found, illustrate control weaknesses in processes and present the complicated fee structure that clients face in a way that is easily understood.

The audit has had immediate and noteworthy impact, with extensive and ongoing interest across Parliament, the media and referrals to the OAG from members of the public.

On the day of tabling, the Attorney General, who is the responsible minister, issued a media release welcoming the audit’s findings and confirming the Government’s commitment to a key recommendation: a review of the Public Trustee’s fee structure and funding model. The review by Treasury started within weeks of the audit tabling.

Just last month the Government announced \$13 million (USD8,600,000) towards fee relief for vulnerable clients of the Public Trustee, and a governing board to improve oversight while the review is ongoing and legislative change is progressed, as recommended by the audit.

The Public Trustee agreed to all the OAG’s recommendations and has made changes to better safeguard its clients, even adding controls to processes before the report tabling.

Members of Parliament continue to cite the report in parliamentary discussions and it was the subject of multiple parliamentary questions. There has also been



**Public Trustee’s  
Administration of Trusts  
and Deceased Estates**



continued national media coverage.

This report demonstrates the OAG’s commitment to help improve the Western Australian public sector’s performance and accountability. It has the potential to result in positive change and improvements for Western Australians using the Public Trustee’s services.

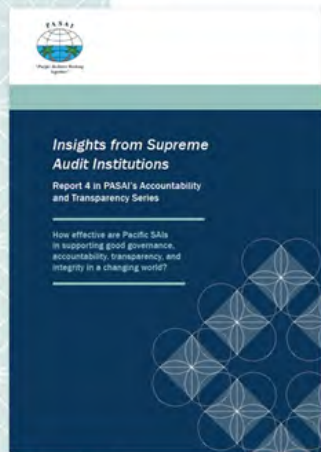
Aloha Morrissey, Assistant Auditor General, Information Systems and Performance Audit; Adam Dias, Director, Information Systems and Performance Audit; and Caroline Spencer, Auditor General



# PASAI's 4th Accountability and Transparency report now available

Report 4 in PASAI's [Accountability and Transparency Series](#) is designed to be a resource for those with power to influence the effectiveness of the public financial management (PFM) system. It considers accountability and transparency in the Pacific through the region's SAI heads and focuses on the current effectiveness of the work of their offices. It also draws together how SAIs contribute to the PFM system in which they operate and, in turn, the impact of that system on the SAIs themselves.

## Roadmap of the report



### Overview

- Part 1 – The Supreme Audit Institution and its work
- Part 2 – Facing Challenges
- Part 3 – Breaking down barriers to effectiveness
- Part 4 – Public Participation

### Snapshots from across the region:

- Making a difference
- Tackling integrity threats
- Collaborative efforts by SAIs

The report highlights the achievements of Pacific SAIs over recent years in improving the lives of people in the region and in helping to improve the performance of the public sector that serves them. These achievements are significant because of the difficulties caused by COVID-19 and a range of challenging environmental and political events.

In the face of these challenges, SAIs are influencing positive change to improve governance, accountability, transparency and integrity in the public financial management system of their countries. The report spotlights that these are often hard-won achievements that require resilience, perseverance and strength of character from the SAI heads and their staff.

Four fundamental challenges remain.

1. Investment is needed in the capability of those responsible for preparing accountability information (for example, government financial statements) for audit offices. Auditors do not prepare accountability information – they assure it once it has been prepared. Without the capability and capacity within public sector agencies (and in particular, ministries of finance) to prepare financial reports to recognised standards, auditors cannot complete their work and provide independent assurance to their respective legislatures and citizens. To be relevant, this information needs to be prepared on a timely basis.
2. Those with power to influence the PFM and integrity system need to establish a clear and aligned view. At times SAI heads are not able to build and retain capability or capacity because of constraints placed on them by others in the system.



The public service commission, the office of the ombudsman, the ministry of finance, public accounts committees and anti-corruption agencies (amongst others) are all vital components of the integrity system. All must play their roles and support the effective functioning of others within the system.

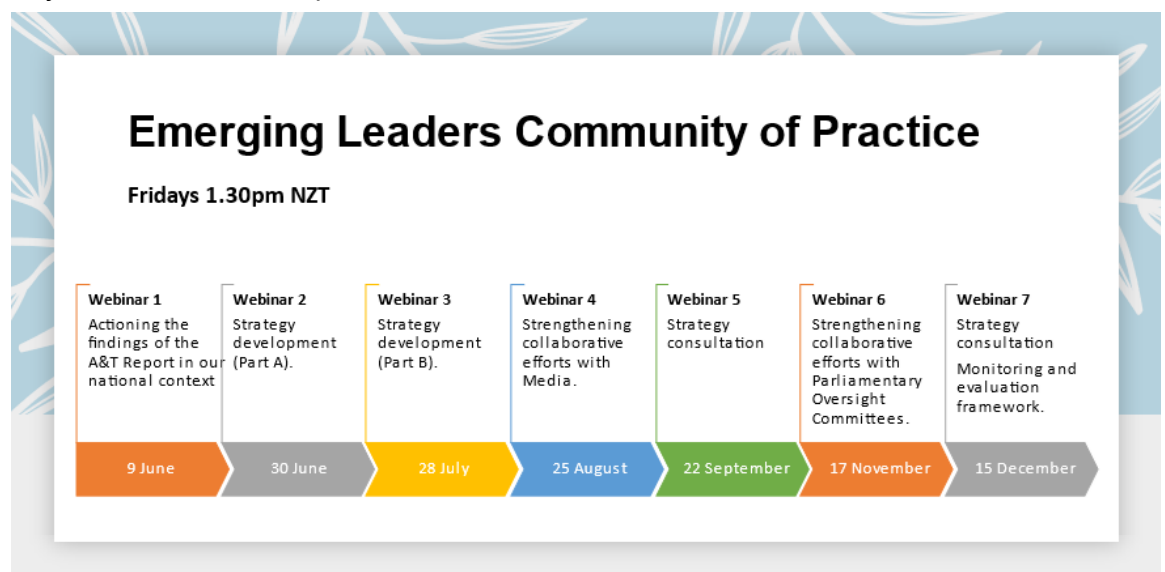
3. This report also identifies that collaboration by SAIs with media and civil society organisations (CSOs) continues to be a relatively untapped opportunity to strengthen the integrity system.
4. It is challenging for SAIs everywhere to build and maintain the capability and capacity needed to perform their role. SAIs in the Pacific are under sustained pressure to build and maintain both the capacity and the capability to play an ongoing and impactful role in their national integrity system. Many of the issues faced by SAIs are as a consequence of not being fully independent of the executive branch of government in their countries. Independence is fundamental to enabling SAI effectiveness. Most SAIs in the region have yet to secure an adequate level of independence. More than 75 per cent of the SAIs surveyed recounted examples of limitations to their independence.

Our work shows that this has affected the ability of SAIs to recruit, promote and retain staff; to build enough capability more generally; and to publicise their work and engage with the Executive, Legislature and the public effectively. These constraints have a direct effect on the work of SAIs, with 42 per cent of SAIs surveyed not completing annual audits of all public sector entities within their mandate on an annual basis. COVID-19 has further affected SAIs, exacerbating the backlog of audits as well as challenging the resilience of other parts of the PFM system.

At the first gathering of the **Leadership Community of Practice** on 8 June 2023, we started to explore ways SAI heads can use this report's findings and case examples to influence change in their national contexts.

In direct response to suggestions made at the PASAI Congress in Palau earlier this year, we have also started a monthly **Community of Practice Programme for Emerging Leaders**. This is open to all SAI staff who wish to attend.

Both communities gather monthly at 1.30 pm (New Zealand Time) on successive days and focus on a specific theme.



PASAI Secretary-General, John Ryan, launched the report in a [webinar on 18 May 2023](#) (20 minutes). You can also watch the [panel discussion](#) that followed (42 minutes).



## ACT Audit Office and SAI Kiribati commence twinning partnership

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Audit Office and the Kiribati Audit Office (KAO) entered into a twinning arrangement following recent discussions between the ACT Auditor-General, Michael Harris, and the Kiribati Auditor-General, Eriati Tauma Manaima, after the 24th PASAI Congress in Koror, Palau.

Mr Harris and his staff welcomed two representatives from the KAO to Canberra in April 2023 to commence the arrangement.

“The twinning arrangement will allow us to share our experience and knowledge to assist the Kiribati Audit Office to improve its performance audit capability,” Mr Harris said.

The Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly, Joy Burch MLA, and Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Elizabeth Kikkert, took the opportunity to meet the Kiribati Audit Office representatives given the partnership between the ACT Legislative Assembly and the Maneaba ni Maungatabu (National Parliament) in Kiribati. The meeting was held in the Kiribati Room at the ACT Legislative Assembly, which was opened in June 2012 in recognition of this partnership.

Ms Burch said, “The ACT Legislative Assembly has a special and enduring relationship with Kiribati and this new twinning arrangement between the ACT and Kiribati audit offices is a further demonstration of the commitment and interest we share.

“These arrangements are also an excellent opportunity for the exchange of information and an opportunity to learn from the way other jurisdictions operate.”

Staff from both offices continue to meet regularly and work together to support the development of performance audit capability within the KAO.



Back: Brett Stanton, Assistant Auditor-General, Performance Audit; Michael Harris, ACT Auditor-General

Front: Tewira Iwi, Kiribati Audit Office; Erema Takaai, Kiribati Audit Office; Joy Burch MLA, Speaker; Elizabeth Kikkert MLA, PAC Chair



# Managing public funding in an emergency response or recovery

In emergency response and recovery situations, funding and purchasing decisions often need to be made quickly, while still ensuring transparent and accountable decision-making, getting value for money and acting lawfully.

New Zealand has experienced a series of significant adverse weather events so far this year, including extreme flooding and erosion caused by Cyclone Gabriel which cut power, blocked roads and swept away homes and lives in its Hawkes Bay and Auckland regions.

To help public sector staff who are setting up and running emergency response and recovery initiatives, the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) of New Zealand summarised some of the key observations and recommendations learnt from previous national emergencies such as the Christchurch earthquakes, the Christchurch terror attack, New Zealand's COVID-19 pandemic response and the provision of emergency housing.

There are useful lessons in [these observations](#) for PASAI members, including core principles for funding and purchasing decisions and handy checklists of key questions for decision makers and their delegates to consider, no matter what level of urgency they face.

Rather than being seen as an administrative burden, making a record of the reasons for a decision, why it was taken quickly, or why it was taken contrary to advice, can help to support the quality of the decision and public confidence in it.

Other related resources include:

- [Crisis response and recovery](#) – a list of the OAG's content about crisis response and recovery work, setting out useful lessons for future events
- [Good practice in reporting about performance](#)
- [Public sector purchases, grants, and gifts: Managing funding arrangements with external parties](#)
- [Expediting investment decisions](#) (Treasury)
- [Financial management of secondments](#) (Treasury)
- [What good looks like: Procurement](#) (Audit NZ)
- [What good looks like: Contract management](#) (Audit NZ)
- [Information on Infrastructure Projects – A Guide](#) (Infrastructure NSW)



Photo credit: Liu Yong, iStock.

## Observations from our work

### *Managing public funding in an emergency response or recovery*

In emergency response and recovery situations, funding and purchasing decisions often need to be made quickly, while still ensuring transparent and accountable decision-making, getting value for money, and acting lawfully.

To help public sector staff who are setting up and running emergency response and recovery initiatives, we have summarised some of the key observations and recommendations from our recent work.

#### Core principles for funding and purchasing decisions

There are some fundamental principles that govern how public organisations use public money to pay for or fund external parties, no matter what level of urgency. These principles apply whether the public organisation is spending money through a procurement process, a grant, or a gift.

The basic principles are:

- **Accountability:** Public organisations are accountable for their performance and should be able to give complete and accurate accounts of how they have used public funds. This includes funds that they passed on to others for particular purposes. They should also

have suitable governance and management arrangements to oversee their funding arrangements.

- **Openness:** Public organisations should be transparent in how they administer funds. This supports accountability and promotes clarity and a shared understanding of the respective roles and obligations of the public organisation and the external parties they have entered into funding arrangements with.
- **Value for money:** Public organisations should use resources effectively, economically, and without waste. They should have due regard for the total costs and benefits of an arrangement and its contribution to the outcomes the organisation is trying to achieve. Where practical, this may involve considering the costs of alternative supply arrangements.
- **Lawfulness:** Public organisations must act within the law and meet their legal obligations.
- **Fairness:** Public organisations have a general legal obligation to act fairly and reasonably. Public organisations must be, and must be seen to be, impartial in their decision-making. Public organisations may sometimes also need to



## Haere ra, Greg Schollum

At the end of April, the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) New Zealand farewelled Greg Schollum, who retired from his role as Deputy Controller and Auditor-General after eight years.

Greg's history with the OAG spans a total of 23 years, first joining Audit New Zealand as an Audit Director and later taking on the role of Assistant Auditor-General Accounting and Auditing Policy.

He has been a strong advocate around the benefit of SAIs and the value these organisations provide to the lives of citizens around the world by strengthening the accountability, transparency and integrity of government and the public sector.



Greg Schollum (far left) at a Secretariat staff meeting in September 2018

Greg also had a crucial role in contributing to public sector auditing in the Pacific and served as PASAI's Secretary-General from 2017 to 2018.

During this time, Greg provided leadership and guidance to the Secretariat, and was responsible for PASAI's relationship and interactions with INTOSAI and other regional working groups, in conjunction with PASAI's representative on INTOSAI's Governing Board.

As well as his contributions to the OAG and the Pacific, Greg has been involved with setting auditing and assurance standards both in New Zealand and internationally for more than 27 years.

His involvement in developing international standards has contributed to the professionalism and integrity of the accounting and auditing profession globally.



He is held in high regard, both in New Zealand and internationally, for his expertise and leadership on accounting and auditing matters.

Greg won't be straying too far from the world of auditing – he has joined the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board and will continue to contribute to the international auditing profession.

Greg is succeeded by Andrew McConnell (of the Ngāti Porou Māori iwi). Andrew held several senior roles in the public sector and most recently was Acting Deputy Director-General Te Uru Rākau – New Zealand Forest Service.

Earlier still he was a Sector Manager at the OAG from 2000 to 2010. The OAG is delighted to welcome Andrew back and looks forward to introducing him to Pacific colleagues when the opportunity arises.

## Upcoming events / training

14 July	Matariki (New Zealand public holiday)
20 July	Webinar: Strengthening collaborative efforts with media
27 July	Leadership Programme Community of Practice session 3
28 July	Special Governing Board meeting (online)
28 July	Emerging Leaders Community of Practice session 3
24 August	Leadership Programme Community of Practice session 4
25 August	Emerging Leaders Community of Practice session 4
21 September	Leadership Programme Community of Practice session 5
22 September	Emerging Leaders Community of Practice session 5
25–29 September	PASAI in-country visit (Marshall Islands)

Dates may change. Find updated information on the the [Events calendar](#).



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