

Media Statement

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Auditor-General's Report: Implementation of the Criminal Justice Enhancement Program (CJEP)

A report by the **Auditor-General, Des Pearson**, on the results of a performance audit report on the implementation of the Criminal Justice Enhancement Program (CJEP) was tabled in Parliament today.

The audit examined whether the implementation of CJEP was well managed with a focus on whether it was implemented on time; on budget; and consistent with planned expectations. The audit also examined the governance, project management, monitoring and reporting frameworks for CJEP.

CJEP's aim was to improve the information systems environment that supports the administration of criminal justice within Victoria. It was approved in October 1998 with funding of \$14.5 million and a target completion date of November 2000.

Mr Pearson found that CJEP has produced benefits, but it has not been implemented on time or on budget. Four of the five CJEP projects have been delivered but the electronic brief/disclosure project (E*Brief) is not operating and may not be fully implemented until 2009.

There were substantial cost overruns on CJEP. The department spent \$39.9 million on CJEP's development and implementation to May 2008, and Victoria Police estimates that a further \$4 million will be required to complete the E*Brief project. The additional expenditure on CJEP partly reflects approved scope changes to the program between 2000 and the end of 2002. CJEP partner agencies advised that they incurred around \$10.4 million for costs associated with CJEP, over and above what has been spent by the department. The department has not recorded or monitored expenditure by these agencies.

Delays in completing CJEP and the associated cost increases are mainly due to underestimation of the complexity, magnitude and level of cross agency involvement required for the project, an inadequately developed business case, which contributed to poor scoping of the project and a failure to identify realistic funding requirements, inadequate specification of system requirements, and development and implementation issues associated with contractor performance.

Mr Pearson found that the extent of benefits arising from CJEP has not been systematically measured, tracked and reported and this represents a lack of accountability to ministers, stakeholders and the community, given the importance of CJEP and the extent of public funds invested in its development.

Mr Pearson also found that while high level partner agency commitment to the CJEP program was always present in a formal sense—through membership of the CJEP Steering Committee and allocation of internal resources by agencies to support the program—this was not always matched by actions and 'on the ground' commitment and ownership.

Direct link to report: <http://www.audit.vic.gov.au>

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