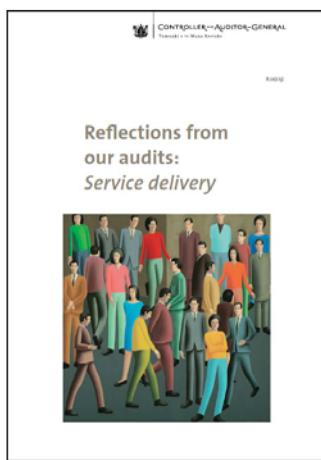




Summary of our report

Reflections from our audits: *Service delivery*



As part of the Auditor-General's multi-year themed work programme, *Service delivery* was the theme adopted for 2013/14. Our work on auditing public entities gives us broad knowledge of changes happening throughout the public sector. This report uses that knowledge to encourage discussion and debate about how the public sector can rise to the challenges and opportunities to deliver better services. We do that by referring to various reports published by the Office in the last four years.

This report is the second we have produced by applying a thematic approach to offer reflections from our work on matters of importance to New Zealanders. It follows the May 2014 report *Reflections from our audits: Our future needs – is the public sector ready?* The feedback to that earlier report indicated that it was

useful, and we have explored the observations in that report in discussions and presentations with people throughout New Zealand.

This latest report identifies three key messages:

- Good people and good service delivery go together.
- There are many challenges and opportunities for public sector delivery in a rapidly changing world.
- The public sector can meet these challenges and opportunities.

Good people

Being in the public service is about serving New Zealanders. Good people and good service delivery go together. The staff providing services are the most important resource in delivering public services. Good services that deliver the best results for people and provide value for money come from entities that:

- connect with people and connect services with people;
- listen to and understand people's needs and learn from feedback;
- respond to changing and different needs; and
- allow people to use services to help themselves.

New Zealanders hold public services in reasonably high regard. Readily available and broad indicators show that, when compared internationally, most New Zealanders seem to receive good public services. In the dynamic service context, this core of good performance is an encouraging base from which public services can be improved.

Vital statistics:

- 34 pages
- Presented to Parliament on Tuesday 16 June 2015
- Contact: reports@oag.govt.nz

Rapidly changing world

Good performance now does not guarantee good performance in the future. There are demographic trends that affect service delivery, which include an ageing population, movements from provincial towns to cities, and a more diverse population. There are also increasing expectations of public services, with financial constraints also presenting challenges for the public sector.

These factors present challenges and opportunities for public entities, including but not limited to:

- how to use effective, efficient, and up-to-date methods, embracing technological advances and other innovations;
- how to involve people, families, and communities in designing, planning, and delivering services;
- how to work with others to deliver connected and integrated services; and
- how to inspire and lead people to deliver good public services that keep improving.

Meeting the challenges and opportunities

The report ends by posing 12 questions for public sector leaders and people working in and with public sectors, to encourage discussion about how the public sector can rise to the challenges and opportunities of the future.

- What can you do differently to ensure long-term successful delivery of public services?
- What scale and range of services are needed in different places across New Zealand?
- How can public entities transform delivery of services through digital working, to bring a “step change” in services?
- How can you involve and empower people, families, and communities in designing, planning, and delivering services?
- How can you use and share data and information to design, plan, and communicate about service delivery?
- How can public entities share, use, and make available information that enables their people to deliver the best services?
- How should public entities work together and with others to deliver connected and integrated services?
- How can public entities work successfully with the private and voluntary sector to meet changing public service needs, collectively making best use of their capacity and capability to deliver value for money?
- What is needed to maintain clear and proper accountabilities for services delivered jointly?
- What are the best measures of service performance and how should services be benchmarked to provide accountability and inform improvements in service delivery?
- What future capacity and capability do public entities need to deliver really good services?
- How can public sector leaders inspire and lead people to deliver high-performing and continuously improving public services?