

C. Status of recommendations made in *Health 2020* (Report 12: 2020–21)

In *Health 2020* (Report 12: 2020–21), we identified the following recommendations for health sector entities. These entities have taken appropriate action for one of the five recommendations. They have also made progress on the other four, but they still need to take further action.

Automate manual financial reporting processes (Queensland Health entities)		Appropriate action has been taken
REC 1	Queensland Health entities should improve the efficiency of their reporting by automating manual processes, where possible.	Management at the Queensland Health entities have improved their reporting through the automation of processes where applicable.
Resolve outstanding audit issues (Queensland Health entities)		Further action needs to be taken
REC 2	Queensland Health entities and their audit committees should continue to regularly review the status of outstanding audit issues and ensure they are resolved in a timely manner.	We note significant improvements in the resolution of long-outstanding issues (the longest outstanding issue is from 2018; previously, it was 2014). There are currently 19 issues that remain outstanding from prior years (one significant deficiency and 18 deficiencies). This recommendation is partially implemented, as issues remain outstanding.



Strengthen the security of information systems (all entities)		Further action needs to be taken
REC 3	<p>We recommend all entities strengthen the security of their information systems. They rely heavily on technology, and increasingly, they have to be prepared for cyber attacks. Any unauthorised access could result in fraud or error, and significant reputational damage.</p> <p>Their workplace culture, through their people and processes, must emphasise strong security practices to provide a foundation for the security of information systems.</p> <p>Entities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide security training for employees so they understand the importance of maintaining strong information systems, and their roles in keeping them secure • assign employees only the minimum access required to perform their job, and ensure important stages of each process are not performed by the same person • regularly review user access to ensure it remains appropriate • monitor activities performed by employees with privileged access (allowing them to access sensitive data and create and configure within the system) to ensure they are appropriately approved • implement strong password practices and multifactor authentication (for example, a username and password, plus a code sent to a mobile), particularly for systems that record sensitive information • encrypt sensitive information to protect it • patch vulnerabilities in systems in a timely manner, as upgrades and solutions are made available by software providers to address known security weaknesses that could be exploited by external parties. <p>Entities should also self-assess against all of the recommendations in <i>Managing cyber security risks</i> (Report 3: 2019–20) to ensure their systems are appropriately secured.</p>	<p>Six significant deficiencies were raised in 2020. These were resolved in 2021.</p> <p>Cyber security remains an area of focus for all the entities. The recommendation to strengthen the security of information systems remains.</p>
Approve service agreements for shared services (Queensland Health entities)		Further action needs to be taken
REC 4	<p>The Department of Health and the hospital and health services should work together to approve and sign service level agreements with each other for the purchasing and payroll services the department performs on behalf of the HHSs. The agreements should clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each party, including the quality and scope of services and the respective costs.</p>	<p>The department and HHSs continue to work together to approve and sign the service level agreements that are outstanding.</p>
Address backlog of asset maintenance (Queensland Health entities)		Further action needs to be taken
REC 5	<p>Queensland Health entities should continue to prioritise high-risk maintenance.</p> <p>The hospital and health services should work with the department to find ways to mitigate the operational, clinical, and financial risks associated with anticipated maintenance.</p>	<p>The anticipated maintenance has increased by \$57 million in 2020–21.</p>

Source: Queensland Audit Office.

Status	Definition
Fully implemented	Recommendation has been implemented, or alternative action has been taken that addresses the underlying issues and no further action is required. Any further actions are business as usual.
Partially implemented	Significant progress has been made in implementing the recommendation or taking alternative action, but further work is required before it can be considered business as usual. This also includes where the action taken was less extensive than recommended, as it only addressed some of the underlying issues that led to the recommendation.
Not implemented	Recommendation accepted No or minimal actions have been taken to implement the recommendation, or the action taken does not address the underlying issues that led to the recommendation.
	Recommendation not accepted The government or the agency did not accept the recommendation.
No longer applicable	Circumstances have fundamentally changed, making the recommendation no longer applicable. For example, a change in government policy or program has meant the recommendation is no longer relevant.

If a general recommendation has been made for all entities to consider, we assess action on issues reported to specific entities in the prior year, as well as any further issues identified in the current year. On this basis, we have concluded whether *appropriate action has been taken* across the sector, or if *further action needs to be taken* to address the risk identified.

Status	Definition
Appropriate action has been taken	Recommendations made to individual entities have been implemented, or alternative action has been taken that addresses the underlying issues, and no further action is required. No new issues have been identified across the sector that indicate an ongoing underlying risk to the sector that requires reporting to parliament.
Further action needs to be taken	Recommendations made to individual entities have not been fully implemented, and/or new recommendations have been made to individual entities, indicating further action is required by entities in the sector to address the underlying risk.

