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## AUDITOR GENERAL FINDS STATE SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY SUCCEEDED IN ENGAGING COMMUNITIES; BUT COULD HAVE HAD GREATER BENEFITS

In the Auditor General's latest report tabled in Parliament today, Auditor General Colin Murphy found that the State's Suicide Prevention Strategy had introduced a new and different approach to prevention, but that the benefits would have been greater if it was better planned and implemented.

Mr Murphy said that *Western Australia's Suicide Prevention Strategy 2009-2013* had succeeded in part in making progress on one of the most difficult challenges we face as a society.

"I commend all those across the State who took part in the Strategy, which took a different approach to suicide prevention by engaging communities in designing and implementing their own prevention activities.

"The good news is that the community feedback was positive across the board, with many Community Action Plans that delivered benefits for individuals and communities."

But Mr Murphy also cautioned that it was too early to tell if there was any direct impact on the suicide rate as a result of the Strategy and that a coordinated suicide prevention approach was still lacking.

"The Strategy could have delivered better value if the governance, procurement and initial planning was better executed."

These issues cost time, effort and money that could have been spent on prevention activities.

"However, changes made half way through the Strategy led to an increase in activity and in the number of Community Action Plans."

Mr Murphy said the report contained important lessons that may help future prevention efforts to deliver benefits that would last longer in communities.

The Auditor General's report 'The Implementation and Initial Outcomes of the Suicide Prevention Strategy' (Report 7 – May 2014) can be downloaded from the Office of the Auditor General website at [www.audit.wa.gov.au](http://www.audit.wa.gov.au)

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