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AUDITOR GENERAL FINDS IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED TO PROGRAM WHICH DELIVERS ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The Auditor General has tabled a report into the delivery of power, water and wastewater services to 84 remote Aboriginal communities and found that while power and water service were reliable, drinking water quality often falls short of Australian standards.

Today's report focused specifically on the Remote Area Essential Services Program and the 84 communities across the Kimberley, Pilbara and Goldfields that it covers.

"We found that power and water supplies are generally reliable in the Program communities, but importantly we also identified several areas where the Program can be delivered better and more efficiently," said Mr Murphy.

"We visited 27 remote communities as part of this audit, and can appreciate how their remoteness directly affects the complexity and cost of supporting them," he said.

"However, there are clear opportunities for improving this Program that should be addressed in the short term."

"For example, Housing could improve its delivery of services to these communities through better coordination, both internally and with other agencies that are also working in these communities."

"I also recommended that Housing should improve water quality and take steps to ensure that Service Providers' testing of wastewater systems complies with contractual requirements, and I'm pleased to see that Housing has already acted on the second recommendation."

"What may take more time is my recommendation for Housing to clarify with government the roles and responsibilities for essential services previously provided by the Commonwealth to remote Aboriginal communities, both those inside and not within the Program."

The Auditor General's report, *Delivering Essential Services to Remote Aboriginal Communities* (Report 8 – May 2015), is available on the Office of the Auditor General website at www.audit.wa.gov.au

ENDS

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