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GOOD START FOR LAND ASSET SALES PROGRAM

In his report tabled today, Auditor General Colin Murphy found that the Land Asset Sales Program has made a good start with managing surplus government land although there are areas that could be done better.

The program, managed by the Department of Lands, identifies surplus properties, assesses best future use and where appropriate sells the property.

The Western Australian Government owns 92% of the state, or 232 million hectares, with an estimated value of \$73.7 billion.

The program is intended to raise over \$400 million through the sale of surplus land assets.

The program requires agencies to justify why they continue to need a property, which will make agencies more accountable for identifying surplus land assets.

If a property is identified as surplus, the program has robust processes for deciding on the best future use, whether this is transferring to another agency, holding the property for future use or selling.

Mr Murphy said he conducted the audit early in implementation so any issues can be identified before they become problematic and avoided as the program progresses.

'I made a number of recommendations for the responsible agencies, including making more information public on the sale price and the cost of preparing land for sale, which will increase transparency.

'While there is no guarantee how much revenue will be raised through the program, Lands has developed sound processes and governance structures to support the program which, if followed, will assist with achieving its objectives,' Mr Murphy said.

The program is responsible for individual land assets that are deemed surplus not assets such as Western Power or Fremantle Ports, which are part of the Major Asset Sales Program.

The Auditor General's report, *Land Asset Sales Program* (Report 4 – April 2016) is available on the Office of the Auditor General website at www.audit.wa.gov.au

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