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## **Mixed results for \$500 million Ord-East Kimberley development**

In his latest report tabled today the Auditor General found that the Ord-East Kimberley Development Plan has delivered mixed results.

Auditor General Colin Murphy said the measure of success for the plan was delivery of social and economic outcomes as well as physical assets and agricultural production.

'While the infrastructure is now in place and land is being farmed, not all expected benefits have been realised,' Mr Murphy said.

In 2009, the State Government announced it would expand the Ord River irrigation network and increase agricultural activity at a cost of \$220 million. In addition, the Commonwealth provided \$195 million to fund social, health and educational infrastructure projects.

Mr Murphy said employment and training during construction was considerable but this has not been sustained with the completion of infrastructure projects.

'Agricultural development has been slower than planned which has limited employment opportunities so far,' Mr Murphy said.

The irrigation expansion project cost the State government \$114 million more than the original commitment and taken 3 years longer than expected.

Inadequate planning and costings at the initial stages of the project resulted in time delays and budget overruns. Limited planning will always place pressure on timelines and finances which is the case here.

Mr Murphy said there are a number of lessons the government can learn from this project and apply to any future development of the Ord and other projects like this.

'Key indicators and measures of success were not put in place for the Ord-East Kimberley Development Plan and this needs to be rectified to track the outcomes of this and any future investment,' said Mr Murphy.

Mr Murphy also recommended that the Department of Regional Development should review the State's objectives and role in any future development of the Ord, and identify suitable governance arrangements.

The Auditor General's report, *Ord-East Kimberley Development* (Report 20 – September 2016), is available on the Office of the Auditor General website at [www.audit.wa.gov.au](http://www.audit.wa.gov.au)

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