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Large number of IT control weaknesses across public sector

The Auditor General today tabled in Parliament the annual *Information Systems Audit Report*. The report summarises the results of the 2019 annual cycle of information systems audits for State government entities and tertiary institutes in the Western Australian public sector.

The report details audits into the following 6 general computer control categories:

- information security
- business continuity
- management of IT risks
- IT operations
- change control
- physical security.

Auditor General Caroline Spencer said while we saw some improvements, including an increase in the number of entities from 13 to 15 who met our benchmark across all categories, we continue to find a large number of control weaknesses that could compromise the confidentiality, integrity and availability of entities' information systems.

'This year we reported 522 computer control issues to 50 state government entities, a slight reduction from the 547 issues reported in 2018 at 47 entities.'

'Of concern, entities are not addressing audit findings quickly, with 45% of findings from this year related to previously reported findings,' Ms Spencer said.

While there was some improvement in controls over information security and business continuity, they continue to be areas of concern. Only 57% (information security) and 54% (business continuity) of entities performed to the expected level.

Ms Spencer said poor controls in these areas leave systems and information vulnerable to misuse and may affect critical services provided to the public.

The report includes a number of case studies to help entities learn from others' experiences.

All public sector entities, including those not audited, are encouraged to consider the report's recommendations where relevant to their function. The report also includes security recommendations for remote working arrangements in light of the COVID-19 situation.

Report resources

- [PDF version](#)
- [online version](#)