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COVID-19 Relief Fund governance and assessment arrangements largely effective

The Auditor General's [COVID-19 Relief Fund](#) report has been presented to Parliament today.

The audit assessed if Lotterywest and the Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries implemented effective governance and assessment arrangements for Phase 1 of the relief fund.

Auditor General Ms Caroline Spencer said despite the fund being implemented quickly, there was a strong focus by the entities on establishing sound governance and risk management arrangements.

'Lotterywest's early consideration of risks and good governance requirements allowed it to implement arrangements that suited the urgency of phase 1 of the fund and provided appropriate oversight.

'However, we found some instances where recording of conflicts of interest and key decisions could be improved. As such we've made recommendations in these areas,' Ms Spencer said.

The audit also found the application assessment, approval and payment arrangements were sound and followed by both entities, resulting in \$37.5 million of Phase 1 grants being awarded.

Ms Spencer said recent public scrutiny of grants in other Australian jurisdictions highlights the risk inherent in some grant programs, particularly approaching an election period. The high level of risk awareness by the Lotterywest Board in this regard, and the sound governance arrangements implemented for the fund, meant this risk did not materialise in Phase 1.

'Maintaining constant vigilance over further phases of the fund's roll-out and other such grant programs, including impartial assessment in accordance with transparent criteria, will help ensure funds are received by those who need them most, and programs achieve their stated outcomes.'

This is the Auditor General's third report on COVID-19 related matters. The first 2 were limited assurance reviews: [Current Status of WA Health's COVID-19 Response Preparedness](#) and [COVID-19: Status of WA Public Testing Systems](#).

Report resources

- [PDF version](#)
- [summary video](#)