

# Appendix C:

## Audit scope and method

### Scope of this audit

#### Who we examined

We examined the following agencies:

Agency	Their key responsibilities
Office of the Public Advocate	Plan and deliver guardianship and investigation services for adults with disability who require the state to make decisions on their behalf
Department of Justice and Community Safety	Manage most steps of the office's staff recruitment and monitor the office's reporting against its BP3 performance measures

#### Our audit objective

To determine whether the office provides guardianship and investigation services that promote and protect the rights and interests of vulnerable adults.

We amended the objective published in our *Annual Plan 2023–24* to focus on the office's guardianship and investigation services.

#### What we examined

We examined how the office:

- makes decisions for clients, including how it considers a person's will, preferences and human rights
- provides consistent and timely guardianship and investigation services
- plans, delivers and oversees its services.

## Conducting this audit

### Assessing performance

To form our conclusion against our objective we used the used the following lines of inquiry and associated evaluation criteria:

Line of inquiry	Criteria
<p>1. Does the office provide guardianship and investigation services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in line with requirements under the <i>Guardianship and Administration Act 2019</i> and relevant standards</li> <li>in a timely manner</li> <li>with active client engagement?</li> </ul>	<p>1.1 The office makes decisions for guardianship clients which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflect clients' will and preferences as far as practicable</li> <li>are based on an assessment of risks and options to provide the best outcome for the client</li> <li>are appropriately documented and reviewed</li> <li>give proper consideration to the <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i>.</li> </ul>
	<p>1.2 In investigations, the office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gathers evidence requested by VCAT</li> <li>considers the views of the proposed represented person and their significant people when making recommendations.</li> </ul>
	<p>1.3 The office actively engages and communicates with clients, proposed represented people and their significant people.</p>
	<p>1.4 The office provides guardianship and investigation services in a timely manner.</p>
<p>2. Does the office manage feedback and complaints about its services in line with better-practice guidance?</p>	<p>2.1 The office enables complaints.</p>
	<p>2.2 The office appropriately responds to complaints.</p>
	<p>2.3 The office uses feedback and complaints to improve processes.</p>
<p>3. Does the office have capacity and capability to deliver guardianship and investigation services that promote the rights and interests of vulnerable adults?</p>	<p>3.1 The office has the organisational capacity and capability to deliver its services.</p>
	<p>3.2 The office considers the complexity of cases, staff capability and capacity when allocating resources.</p>
	<p>3.3 The office identifies areas where it can improve business or system efficiency and takes action to do so.</p>
<p>4. Does the office measure, report on and improve its performance?</p>	<p>4.1 The office sets relevant, reliable and complete performance measures.</p>
	<p>4.2 The office monitors and reports on its performance against these measures.</p>
	<p>4.3 The office takes action to improve performance where it identifies gaps.</p>

### Our methods

As part of the audit we:

- reviewed and analysed documentation, including data from the office and the department
- interviewed key officers and staff
- reviewed a selection of the office's guardianship, investigation and complaint case files
- accepted submissions from the public about their lived experience with the office
- consulted with 7 of the office's former clients to hear about their lived experiences.

We also consulted with other stakeholders about relevant sections of the report.

## Compliance

We conducted our audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* and ASAE 3500 *Performance Engagements* to obtain reasonable assurance to provide a basis for our conclusion.

We complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements related to assurance engagements.

We also provided a copy of the report to the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Treasury and Finance.

Unless otherwise indicated, any individuals named in this report are not the subject of adverse comment or opinion.

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## Cost and time

The full cost of the audit and preparation of this report was \$530,000.

The duration of the audit was 9 months from initiation to tabling.

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