

Auditor-General for the Northern Territory

MEDIA STATEMENT

30 July 2025

Results of Financial Audits

Auditor-General's Report to the Legislative Assembly No 1: 2025-26

The Auditor-General, Mr Jara Dean, tabled today his report to the Legislative Assembly on results of financial audits of Charles Darwin University, Menzies School of Health Research and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education for the year ended 31 December 2024.

The report also covers 30 June 2024 audits of:

- Desert Knowledge Australia
- Common Funds administered by the Public Trustee
- Northern Territory Police Supplementary Benefit Scheme
- Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) National Park and Cobourg Peninsula Sanctuary and Marine Park boards.

In addition, the report also covers the audit of the Cobourg Peninsula Sanctuary and Marine Park Board's financial report for the year ended 30 June 2023 which was delayed.

It took on average over 6 months after the relevant year end to finalise the audits and issue audit opinions. "The timeliness of financial reporting impacts the relevance and usefulness of financial information being reported and is fundamental for transparency, accountability and public trust," Mr Dean said. "It is simply too long for Parliament and the public to wait for over six months to be provided with complete and accurate financial information by public sector entities."

One of the 40 audit findings in the report was that the Public Trustee did not comply with its obligation to provide investors with required information. Other high risk audit findings were raised mainly in connection with controls around user access to IT applications and incorrect accounting practices.

All entities included in the report received clean audit opinions on their financial reports.

Four of the eight entities included in the report had mistakes or omissions in previously issued financial reports which required corrections. Incorrect revenue recognition was the main driver of prior period errors.

The Auditor-General made the following observations:

- Charles Darwin University reported an increase in revenue which led to a much smaller deficit than reported last year. Revenue from course fees paid by international students increased by \$18.2 million while domestic students contributed an additional \$5.1 million in comparison.
- Batchelor Institute reported improved retention and completion rates.
- Overall, the higher education and VET sector generated \$474.5 million in revenue and employed over 2,000 full time equivalent employees in 2024. Employee expenses for the sector totalled \$256.2 million in 2024, an increase of \$12.3 million or 5.1% compared to 2023.

The Auditor-General is a statutory position established under the *Audit Act 1995*. The Auditor-General and the Northern Territory Auditor-General's Office assist Parliament to hold Government accountable for its use of public resources by providing independent audits.

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