

Review of the Sustainable Government Program

NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change

Final Report

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Acronyms

CASPER	Centralised Analysis System for Performance of Energy and Resources
GFF	Government Finance Facility
GGS	General Government Sector
GREP	NSW Government Resource Efficiency Policy
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECC	Office of Energy and Climate Change
SGT	Sustainable Government Program Team

Executive Summary

The Sustainable Government Program supports NSW Government agencies and local councils to improve their resource efficiency and sustainability performance. This evaluation was commissioned to review the program over the period from 2017 to 2022 and consider how well the program was designed and implemented, to what extent it is on track to achieve its planned outcomes, and what lessons can be learned.

Overall, the program has been effective in supporting agencies to reduce their resource use and accelerate the transition to net-zero emissions in their operations by 2050.

Summary of Findings

The program design was appropriate to the needs of agencies at the time it was launched. The program designers used an evidence informed program logic approach to design activities that were expected to help agencies meet their energy efficiency objectives.

Over the period 2017 to 2022 the program has helped 82 agencies with 1065 projects.¹ Of the 1065 projects, 88% were for Solar Photovoltaic projects, and 50% of these projects were feasibility studies.

However, while the program is helping agencies save energy, a number of agencies are not on track in terms of expected outcomes. For example:

- The NSW Government Resource Efficiency Policy (GREP) states that all agencies shall have an energy management plan by 2019, however the Sustainable Government Team reported that only 32% have one in 2023.
- Only 26% of General Government Sector (GGS) agencies have met their E1 GREP targets, according to their 2021-22 GREP report.
- An analysis of the trend in energy savings shows that the program might just achieve the 10% savings target by 2024, as long as the rate of savings increases over the next two years.

Lessons learned

The evaluation produced the following lessons:

- The Sustainable Government Program is a change program. All agency interviewees stressed that, in addition to technical support, success depends on effective leadership and change management.
- The Sustainable Government Team needs change management capabilities. Although interviewees praised the Team for their technical skills, most agree that the Team could be more effective in helping agencies change if it had greater change management capabilities.

¹ Based upon project tracking data provided by the Sustainable Government Team

- Agency needs change over time. When the Sustainable Government Program was launched, most agencies were not mature with respect to sustainability. A number of the agencies have now matured, and their needs have shifted to a more strategic position. Even for agencies that are still not mature, the external environment has changed, and different programs place requirements on agencies – some of them similar to the Sustainable Government Program. Regularly assessing agency needs would help the Sustainable Government Program remain relevant and effective.
- CASPER is a critical enabler of the Sustainable Government Program - it facilitates sustainability planning, it enables the Sustainable Government Team to adaptively manage the program, and it facilitates reporting and accountability. CASPER also ensures the Government's sustainability performance is visible to the general public, and a poorly performing CASPER represents a reputational risk for the Government. As a critical enabler, CASPER's data integrity and performance should be a priority for the Sustainable Government Team.

Opportunities for improvement

The following opportunities for improvement are presented for consideration:

- Consider targeted interventions to improve the performance of the 65% of agencies who have not met their energy efficiency target.
- Provide a greater level of strategic support to agencies, in addition to technical support and information provision.
- Upskill the Sustainable Government Team to include change management and executive leadership support capabilities.
- Focus on CASPER data integrity and performance to ensure it adequately enables the Sustainable Government Program.
- Use the M&E workbook attached to the operational plan to monitor program outcomes and support adaptive management.
- Improve the Sustainable Government Team's project management practices.
- Routinely assess stakeholder needs to capture changes as agencies mature and needs change.
- Improve future program planning with a more rigorous use of the program logic approach.
- Minimise the reporting burden on agencies by working with similar government programs to align reporting requirements.

About the evaluation

The Sustainable Government Program provides supports NSW Government agencies and local councils to improve their resource efficiency and sustainability performance.

Agencies are guided by the NSW Government Resource Efficiency Policy (GREP): a framework of measures, targets, and standards for improved practices in energy and water use, waste, and clean air. The Sustainable Government Program is particularly focused on the GREP measures E1 – energy saving target and E5 – solar energy use target.

The Sustainable Government Program is funded by the NSW Climate Change Fund (CCF). To comply with the CCF funding requirements, the Office of Energy and Climate Change (OECC) is required to evaluate the program to establish whether the overall design and delivery mechanisms have been efficient and effective, and that outcomes are developing as expected. The OECC appointed independent consultants ACIG to conduct the evaluation.

Scope

The evaluation covered the period 2017 to 2022. OECC defined the scope of the evaluation to focus on the following immediate outcomes from the program logic:

- Accurate and relevant data is available to inform future sustainability planning and strategies.
- Government agencies identify resource efficiency savings opportunities and initiatives.
- Government agencies have the support needed to incorporate resource efficiency and GHG reduction targets within strategic planning.
- The Government Finance Facility (GFF) is managed and streamlined to drive sustainability projects within the government sector.
- Government agencies are reporting annually on their sustainability performance.

Audience

The primary evaluation audience includes the program manager and senior officers.

Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation is required to answer the following Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)²:

- How well was the program designed?
- How well was the program delivered and managed?
- To what extent is the program on track to achieve the planned outcomes?
- What lessons can be learned about program delivery and governance?

Approach

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach that included documentary evidence, data collected by the Sustainable Government Team, and stakeholder perspectives.

Stakeholders engaged by the evaluation included agencies that have received services from the program, and internal staff. Seventeen agency representatives were interviewed from the Australian Museum; Create NSW; Department of Communities and Justice; Department of Customer Service; Department of Planning and Environment; and Department of Education, Hunter New England LHD; Property NSW; State Emergency Service; TAFE; and the Sustainable Government Team.

Limitations

This evaluation was subject to the following limitations:

- A limited number of stakeholder interviews. Seventeen interviews were conducted covering ten agencies. While this number represents about 15% of the General Government Sector agencies, and these agencies were selected as representative of the whole group of potential agencies, it is still a small sample from which to draw general conclusions.
- The quality of data from CASPER is uncertain. The evaluation experienced a number of quality related issues with the data, which was consistent with feedback from stakeholders who expressed a lack of confidence about the reliability of the data. Furthermore, data in the SGT Project Tracker workbook provided by the Sustainable Government Team was not up to date, and the Sustainable Government Team indicated that energy efficiency data is located in various reports.

These issues mean that any actions arising from this evaluation should be confirmed with further analysis.

² The full set of KEQs with their focus questions are reproduced in attachment 1.

Findings

KEQ 1. How well was the program designed?

KEQ 1 addresses the appropriateness of the program design. Appropriateness refers to the extent that the needs of program recipients are likely to be met by the program's objectives and strategies.³ The question focused on:

- Were program priorities aligned to the needs of government agencies?
- Was the design appropriate to support agencies to meet GREP targets?
- What can be done to make the program more effective?

Finding - The program design is evidence-based and aligned to agencies' needs.

The Program Operational Plan references two pieces of research into agency needs:

- Behaviour Works agency typology research. The research, undertaken by Behaviour Works in 2017, developed a typology of NSW government agencies that reflected critical indicators and attributes that determine the extent to which resource efficiency and other sustainability initiatives are embedded within each agency's organisational practices and culture. The aim of this research was to inform strategic planning and road-mapping to 2022.
- A report into the NSW public sector awareness, behaviour, and reporting practices for GREP. The research, undertaken by URBIS in 2016, reviewed the effectiveness of the then Office of Environment and Heritage's support initiatives. The research helped to look at opportunities to shift agencies from a 'compliance' to a 'continuous improvement' mindset.

The problem statement:

'The NSW Government lacks resources, staff, skills, expertise, awareness, motivation tools and capacity to reduce resource use and expenditure. This means that agencies do not implement cost effective opportunities to improve resource efficiency.'

and the program design are consistent with the research.

Further evidence that understanding agency needs is important was demonstrated in the 2019 review of the GREP. The review engaged a number of agencies in the development of the policy. While this was not directly related to the Sustainable Government Program, it demonstrates that the OECC continues to inform its policy design process with input from stakeholders.

³ NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines 2016, accessed at https://arp.nsw.gov.au/assets/ars/f506555395/NSW-Government-Program-Evaluation-Guideline-January-2016_1.pdf

Finding – The program logic is largely appropriate.

A measure of appropriateness is the extent to which there is a logical relationship (an outcome hierarchy) between end-of-program outcomes and activities.⁴

The Sustainable Government Program program logic mostly exhibits a logical relationship between outcomes levels; however, some improvement is possible. For example:

- The intermediate outcome '*Government agencies access the broad range of financing options for funding sustainability initiatives*' is not connected to the end-of-program outcome '*NSW Government agencies have improved their sustainability performance ...*' when, in fact, it is a logical contributor because access to finance is an enabler of sustainability projects.
- The third end-of-program outcome – '*NSW Government agencies have expanded and streamlined options for accessing services and finance to deliver sustainability initiatives*' – is actually a contributor to the other two end-of-program outcomes - it has been elevated to an end-of-program outcome when it should be an intermediate outcome.

The program logic is a useful tool if used correctly. It should give an overall picture of how the end-of-program outcomes are expected to be achieved through a series of transitions that link outputs to end-of-program outcomes.

Finding – The program design was appropriate to address the problem statement.

The problem the program was established to address was: '*The NSW Government lacks resources, staff, skills, expertise, awareness, motivation tools and capacity to reduce resource use and expenditure.*'

The program design planned to address the problem using four activity streams:

- **Data and analytics.** The program planned to develop and continually improve the online government reporting portal (Centralised Analysis System for Performance of Energy and Resources, or CASPER). The purpose of this work was to ensure that data provided by government agencies could be used to inform future sustainability planning and strategies.
- **Strategic Planning, Leadership, and Partnerships.** The program planned to develop a cohort of executive leaders who would drive strategic change within their agencies with a specific focus on sustainability. This stream of activities included helping agencies develop their strategic sustainability plans, fostering sustainability leadership through executive engagement and established communities of practice, and strengthening internal and external partnerships to leverage their capabilities and capacities.

⁴ <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/4cmas/08640appevaldesign.pdf>

- **Delivery and support services.** The program planned to provide tailored support for agencies to drive sustainability initiatives. The tailored support was to include:
 - Templates and tools to help agencies identify resource efficiency savings opportunities.
 - Key recommendations for agencies relating to the priority implementation of activities to drive action.
 - Detailed sustainability strategic plans for agencies to meet their sustainability targets.
- **Reporting and communication.** The program planned to assist agencies to meet their GREP reporting obligations.

As a change model, this design is appropriate because:

- It targets leadership and strategic planning, which is essential for embedding sustainability within organisations.
- It provides technical support, which addresses agency sustainability capability, and which leaves agencies with a roadmap (the detailed sustainability strategic plans) that will guide agency actions.
- It establishes a mechanism that captures data required for evidence-based decision making.
- It provides a vehicle for agencies to efficiently meet their reporting requirements.

KEQ 1 Conclusion and improvement opportunities

Overall, the program design was appropriate to the needs of agencies at the time it was launched. The program designers used an evidence informed program logic approach to design activities that would lead to outcomes that would help agencies meet their energy efficiency objectives.

Future program planning could benefit from a more rigorous use of the program logic approach ensuring a logical if/then flow from outputs to end-of-program outcomes.

KEQ 2. How well was the program delivered and managed?

KEQ 2 addresses the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery process. The question focuses on:

- How well was the program implemented?
- Were government agencies engaged effectively?
- Was the collaboration with Treasury effective? Did that lead to rethinking some program partnerships?
- How well was delivery modified, through adaptive management, to address emerging risks / opportunities, changing situations and incorporate lessons learned?
- Was internal resourcing adequate to deliver the program effectively?

Finding – Program implementation was well planned and program reporting has been undertaken.

The 2017 – 2021 Operation Plan includes all of the elements expected in a good practice plan, such as the policy context, a statement of the problem being addressed, an overview of the program design, tasks and milestones, budget and resourcing, procurement, project governance including roles and responsibilities, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, and risk assessment. The operational plan is supported by a monitoring and evaluation workbook, an evaluation plan, and a risk matrix.

Several program status reports examined suggest that the program reported regularly.

Finding – There is an opportunity to improve program monitoring by using key indicators to measure performance.

Program monitoring appears confused. The monitoring and evaluation workbook that was attached to the operational plan has a list of indicators that are aligned to the outcome hierarchy and intended to be used to monitor performance. The indicator section of the workbook represents good practice: it includes key indicators, baselines, targets for the years from 2019 to 2022, and a data source for each indicator.

Unfortunately, though, current program staff are not aware of the workbook and noted that the indicators have not been used for program monitoring.

Program progress is reported via Quarterly Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Reports. Ten reports were examined, from the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. The earliest M&E report focused on improvement, adaptation, and risk, however for the section on indicators the 2018 report simply says, *'Indicators suggest the program is generally on track.'* The performance measures themselves are not reported.

In 2019 the report changed from an improvement focus to a focus of progress against the plan. The indicators section is absent, however the reports state that *'The program is tracking beyond its expected outcomes.'* No evidence is provided to support the statement.

The quarterly M&E reports do have a section titled 'What has the team done to adapt and improve program delivery?' However, in the reports examined, this section was used to record activities completed rather than improvement actions.

The intent of the reports is appropriate however the execution could be improved.

Finding – The Sustainable Government program has supported multiple agencies with their energy efficiency projects.

According to the SGT Project Tracker⁵, over the period 2017 to 2022 the Sustainable Government Program has supported 82 agencies with their energy efficiency projects. 45 (55%) of the 82 agencies were classed as General Government Sector (GGS) agencies. Of the 37 non-GGS agencies, 23 (66%) were from the local government sector.

Over the period 2017 to 2022, the program delivered 1065 projects, 805 of them for GGS agencies. This represents an average of 17.9 projects per GGS agency and 7.0 projects per non GGS agency.

Of the 1065 projects, 25% were in the Health cluster, 24% in the Education cluster, 20% in Stronger Communities, 16% were in local government, and the remaining 15% were distributed across 11 other clusters, including 18 or 1.7% of projects for the private sector.

Finding – The Sustainable Government Team's work has been dominated by feasibility assessments of Solar Photovoltaic projects.

An analysis of the SGT Project Tracker data in the period 2017 to 2022 revealed that:

- Of the 1065 projects recorded, 88% were Solar PV projects, 5% were lighting projects, with the remaining 7% spread over 27 project categories.
- The Sustainable Government Team delivered ten service types, shown in the graph below. Of the total projects, 50% were feasibility studies for Solar PV projects.
- The SGT Project Tracker spreadsheet includes a date labelled 'Installation date'. Over the period 2017 to 2022, 384 projects or 36% had an installation date. For Solar PV projects, 41% included an installation date, however the Sustainable Government Team suggested that about 60% of solar projects have been implemented⁶.

⁵ SGT Project Tracker is an MS Excel based workbook used to track project progress.

⁶ The difference is likely due to the SGT Project Tracker worksheet not being up to date.



Finding – There is an opportunity to improve the way the Sustainable Government Team manages its project data.

The SGT Project Tracker workbook contains details of projects from 2011 to 2022, however the Sustainable Government Team has indicated that, as it was not required for formal reporting, it is not always updated, and energy savings can only be determined by accessing ‘various other reports’.

This is not an effective way to support project management or reporting. The Sustainable Government Team should consider a more robust approach to project management.

Finding – It is unclear that the collaboration with Treasury has facilitated the work of the Sustainable Government Team.

KEQ 2 includes the focus question: ‘*Was the collaboration with Treasury effective? Did that lead to rethinking some program partnerships?*’ In discussion with the Sustainable Government Team this was interpreted to mean whether the Sustainable Government Team’s position within the Treasury cluster made a difference to its work and outcomes.

The evidence for assessing the effectiveness of collaboration with Treasury was limited. Some stakeholders, mostly the smaller agencies, felt that the Sustainable Government Team’s position in Treasury should be an advantage in accessing decision makers. Other stakeholders did not consider the location of the Sustainable Government Team to be an advantage and pointed to the difficulties they have experienced with accessing the GFF as evidence that the Sustainable Government Team’s position does not ensure a more effective process. Although closer collaboration can impact process effectiveness, the difficulties experienced could also be due to the processes themselves (for example, stringent business case rules or complex approval processes).

Finding – Agency reporting efficiency could be improved if program databases and data collection requirements were better aligned.

Several agency interviewees suggested that CASPER data integrity could be improved if CASPER was linked to their other reporting systems. They also suggested that their needs could be better met if the Sustainable Government Program worked more collaboratively with other programs. For example, Australian Museum said they have to report to EarthCheck's Sustainable Development program and to the Australian Government's Climate Active program, in addition to their GREP reporting requirements.

Many agencies must report on multiple programs, and agency efficiency may be improved if different programs worked more collaboratively to reduce the burden on agencies.

Finding – Agencies have mixed views about how they have been engaged.

A stakeholder management plan was developed as part of the original program planning. The plan lists how about 30 stakeholders would be engaged. However, while the plan professes to Consult, Involve, Collaborate or Empower, most of its proposed engagement channels facilitate informing stakeholders, rather than deeper engagement activities.

Some interviewees who were present when the Sustainable Government Program was launched recall being engaged by the program, however others felt that they have not been adequately engaged.

KEQ 2 Conclusion and improvement opportunities

Overall, the evidence suggests that the program has been effective in supporting agencies. However, there are a number of improvement opportunities that the Sustainable Government Team could consider, such as:

- Providing a greater level of strategic support to agencies, in addition to technical support and information provision.
- Upskilling the Sustainable Government Team's capabilities to include change management and executive leadership support.
- Using the M&E workbook attached to the operational plan to monitor and support adaptive management.
- Improving the Sustainable Government Team's data management practices.
- Liaising with other government programs to align reporting requirements and reduce the reporting burden on agencies.
- Greater collaboration with Treasury to improve and streamline the GFF processes.

KEQ 3. To what extent is the program on track to achieve the planned outcomes?

KEQ 3 addresses the results of the program. The question focused on:

- Have GREP targets been met? (E1, E5)
- Did the program save energy?
- If GREP targets have not been met, what is required to address this?

The planned outcomes in the KEQ refer to the immediate in-scope outcomes from the program logic, which include:

- Accurate and relevant data is available to inform future sustainability and planning strategies.
- Government agencies identify resource efficiency savings opportunities and initiatives.
- Government agencies have the support needed to incorporate resource efficiency and Greenhouse gas reduction targets within strategic planning.
- The Government Finance Facility (GFF) is managed and streamlined to drive sustainability projects within the government sector.
- Government agencies are reporting on their sustainability performance on an annual basis.

Finding – The outcome 'Accurate and relevant data is available to inform future sustainability and planning strategies' is constrained by CASPER user experience and data quality challenges.

Most agency interviewees said they did not use the CASPER data for sustainability planning because they did not trust its accuracy. Several of the larger agencies interviewed said they produced their own Government Resource Efficiency Policy reports because they did not trust the data in CASPER. For example, in its 2021-22 report, Transport for NSW states:

'Transport for NSW does not rely on the data contained within CASPER database, as the accuracy of the data cannot be verified at this stage and is not a true reflection of Transport's achievements in the sustainability space.'⁷

All interviewees acknowledged the challenges associated with maintaining accurate and relevant data. All interviewees also acknowledged the work done by the Sustainable Government Team to resolve data issues, and several interviewees suggested that the CASPER team was under-resourced for the challenges it faces (however this review does not have any corroborating evidence to confirm this view).

⁷ Page 11, Transport for NSW Annual GREP Report, Statement of Compliance 2021-22

The Sustainable Government Team is aware of the challenges and has already undertaken a design review of CASPER to address some of the user experience issues and has also initiated a data cleansing project.

Casper is inconsistent. For example, the 'progress to date' metric is supposed to be calculated as savings from energy efficiency projects. However, the progress to date figure reported in the 2021-22 HealthShare NSW report is negative – instead of project savings the figure reports the change in usage from the base year.

Finding – The outcome 'Government agencies identify resource efficiency savings opportunities and initiatives' is constrained because only 32% of agencies have an energy management plan.

The GREP states that *'agencies must create a plan to undertake projects for all sites covered by this measure or to achieve aggregate savings of at least 10%. The plan must be submitted to the Office of Environment and Heritage (now OECC) by November 2019.'*

According to the Sustainable Government Team, at March 2023 only 32% of agencies who are required to have an energy management plan, have one. Without a plan it is unlikely that finding efficiency savings will be a priority for the remaining 68% of agencies.

Finding – 26% of agencies that are required to produce GREP reports claim to have met their GREP target.

At the time of review the CASPER had 104 agencies listed on the Public Sector web page. Of the 104 agencies listed, 23 agencies (22%) either had not submitted their 2021-22 report or the report did not include a target or savings.

Of the 81 agencies that did report a target and savings, only 27 agencies (26% of the total listed) claim to have met their GREP target of 10% savings on their baseline energy consumption.

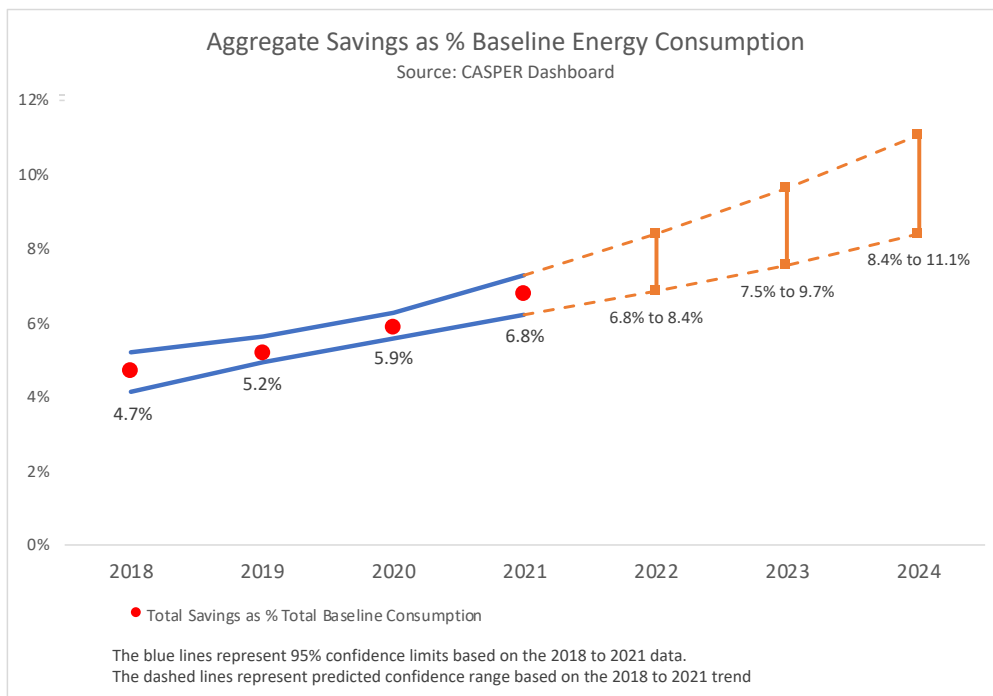
Finding – The program will struggle to achieve the targeted 10% aggregate savings by 2023-24 unless the rate of energy savings improves.

The CASPER publicly available data⁸ was used to calculate the aggregate % savings on the baseline year. The red points in the following chart shows the trend from 2018 to 2021 while the blue lines represent the 95% confidence interval for that period. The 2018 to 2021 data was then used to forecast the savings over the following three years.

Based on the available data, the 10% Government Resource Efficiency Policy target could be met by 2024 if the trend in savings continues at the slightly exponential rate that it has

⁸ The CASPER Public Dashboard data was used to compare aggregate consumption and savings. The data is only available until 2021.

been over the preceding four years (that is, the rate must increase each year), however if the rate declines or flatlines then there is a good chance that the target will not be met.⁹



The Sustainable Government team has a window of opportunity to support agencies who have not met their targets to increase their level of performance. The Sustainable Government team could conduct a review of under-performing agencies and consider a targeted program of support at both leadership and operational levels to lift their performance.

Finding – The outcome 'Government agencies have the support needed to incorporate resource efficiency and GHG reduction targets within strategic planning' could be strengthened by the Sustainable Government Team taking a more strategic focus.

Most of the agency interviewees that have been supported by the Sustainable Government Program gave, as examples of support, help with a business case, or a study into fitting Photovoltaics. They did not tend to describe the program as one that supports their agency to integrate sustainability into their strategic planning process or into their culture.

They pointed out that, while this 'technical' support may have been relevant when the program started, their needs have changed. They still require technical help; however, they recognise that without leadership from their executive and middle level managers, their efforts at implementing sustainable practices will continue to be challenging.

⁹ It should be noted that some agencies may have elected to meet the target using the first criterion – implementing energy saving projects at each site, however the analysis was unable to determine how many agencies elected for this option from the available data.

One sustainability-mature agency felt that the Sustainable Government Team's support staff were too junior to help them with strategic planning. He noted that he has never been engaged by a manager from the Sustainable Government Team, only by junior staff who he feels are not focused on strategic issues.

The Sustainable Government Team is currently undertaking a strategic review of the program. This is timely, and it should include a thorough scan of the environment, an analysis of stakeholder needs (including the needs of the agencies which do not submit the required reports), an assessment of the future role of the Sustainable Government Program if it is to facilitate change in agencies, and an assessment of the resourcing required.

Finding – The outcome 'The GFF is managed and streamlined to drive sustainability projects within the government sector' is not apparent.

The Government Finance Facility (GFF) exists to invest in government sustainability projects. About half the interviewees were not or only vaguely aware of the GFF and do not think of it as supporting their sustainability projects.

Several interviewees familiar with the GFF said that it is cumbersome, has thresholds that are too high and a process that takes too long. They did, however, praise the Sustainable Government Team for the help they have provided in navigating the GFF process.

Finding – The outcome 'Government agencies are reporting on their sustainability performance on an annual basis' has, according to the Sustainable Government Team, been achieved.

The Sustainable Government Team confirmed that 100% of agencies that are required to report annually have completed a GREP report.

However, a review¹⁰ of the CASPER public portal showed that 13 agencies had not submitted their 2021-22 report. The Sustainable Government Team noted that it is not mandatory for agencies to report via CASPER and that the 13 agencies have reported outside of it. This cannot be confirmed; however, this issue still presents a problem. The data on the public portal is a reputational risk to government because the web page clearly states that these agencies have not reported, and this information is in the public domain.

KEQ 3 Conclusion and improvement opportunities

Several of the in-scope outcomes are constrained in developing, and it is unclear whether the program will achieve the 10% GREP E1 savings target by 2024 unless the rate of savings increases over the next two years.

The key improvement opportunity is for the Sustainable Government Team to consider targeted interventions to lift the performance of the 65% of agencies who have not met their target.

¹⁰ Accessed on 13th March 2023

KEQ 4. What lessons can be learned about program delivery and governance?

KEQ 4 is about learning and improvement. The question focused on:

- What unintended outcomes and impacts (positive or negative) have occurred?

Lesson - The Sustainable Government Program is a change program.

Agency interviewees were consistent in pointing out that sustainability and similar programs are change programs; they require people to change the way they think and the priorities they focus on. The agencies who were more sustainability-mature also suggested that the Sustainable Government Program has been implemented as a 'technical' program, with templates and tools and technical advice, which are important, but they do not adequately address the change barriers that agencies face.

The key success factor in any change program is leadership – managers at all levels promoting and role modelling the change required and making it a priority.

The program logic suggests that the program designers understood the importance of leadership and made it one of the activity streams. The leadership stream is not in-scope for this evaluation, however feedback from stakeholders suggests that it was not as active as the other streams of activity.

The Sustainable Government Team has been undertaking a strategic review of the Sustainable Government Program. This review should include a thorough scan of the environment, an analysis of stakeholder needs, an assessment of the future role of the Sustainable Government Program if it is to facilitate change in agencies, and an assessment of the resourcing required.

Lesson – The Sustainable Government Team needs the right mix of capabilities.

To effectively engage leaders and agency workforces, the Sustainable Government Program requires change management capabilities in addition to technical capabilities. The Sustainable Government Team interviewees suggested that the change management capabilities of the Team could be strengthened.

Lesson – Agency needs change over time, and programs must adapt to those changed needs or they risk losing relevancy.

When the Sustainable Government Program was launched, most agencies were not mature with respect to sustainability. A number of the agencies have now matured, and their needs have shifted to a more strategic position. Even for agencies that are still not mature, the external environment has changed, and different programs place requirements on agencies – some of them similar to the Sustainable Government Program. To remain relevant the Sustainable Government Program should revisit stakeholder needs regularly, including a scan of the environment.

Lesson – CASPER is a critical service and may need further focus.

CASPER is a key enabler of the Sustainable Government Program. It provides data that agencies should use in their planning, it enables the Sustainable Government Team to monitor program progress and apply adaptive management, and it also facilitates reporting for accountability.

CASPER is also the key vehicle for making the Government's performance visible to the general public. A poorly performing CASPER represents a reputational risk for the Government.

As noted earlier in this report, CASPER is not seen to be reliable according to the small sample of agencies interviewed. It is noted that this evidence is from a small number only however the feedback was consistent. It presents the Sustainable Government Team with an opportunity to gather feedback from a broader analysis of its customer base. Some interviewees have suggested that CASPER is under-resourced, however this evaluation does not have the evidence to support or refute this claim.

The lesson, however, if CASPER is accepted as a critical enabler of the program, is that CASPER's integrity and performance should be a priority for the Sustainable Government Team.

KEQ 4 – Summary of lessons

- Ensure the program focusses on strategic leadership – a key success factor in any change program – in addition to technical support. Consider how best to support agency managers at all levels to promote and role model the change required, and to make those changes a priority.
- Ensure the Sustainable Government Team includes change management expertise and capabilities.
- The Sustainable Government Program should revisit stakeholder needs regularly.
- CASPER is a critical enabler of the Sustainable Government Program. As such its performance and integrity should be a priority for the Sustainable Government Team.

Attachments

1 - Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation was required to answer the following Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs).

KEQ	Focus questions
1. How well was the program designed? (Appropriateness)	1.1 Were program priorities aligned to the needs of government agencies? 1.2 Was the design appropriate to support agencies to meet GREP targets? 1.3 What can be done to make the program more effective?
2. How well was the program delivered and managed? (Effectiveness, efficiency)	2.1 How well was the program implemented? 2.2 Were government agencies engaged effectively? 2.3 Was the collaboration with Treasury effective? Did that lead to rethinking some program partnerships? 2.4 How well was delivery modified, through adaptive management, to address emerging risks / opportunities, changing situations and incorporate lessons learned? 2.5 Was internal resourcing adequate to deliver the program effectively?
3. To what extent is the program on track to achieve the planned outcomes? (Legacy, equity)	3.1 Have GREP targets been met? (E1, E5) 3.2 Did the program save energy? 3.3 If GREP targets have not been met, what is required to address this?
4. What lessons can be learned about program delivery and governance? (Effectiveness, appropriateness)	4.1 What unintended outcomes and impacts (positive or negative) have occurred?

2 – Program Logic

