

- In the same period, four communities exceeded safe levels of uranium in their water by up to double the level allowed for under the Australian guideline.
- Fourteen communities recorded nitrates above the safe level for bottle-fed babies under three months old in 2014.

Testing of wastewater systems between January 2012 and June 2014 to establish if they are working effectively was irregular or incomplete and failed to meet contractual requirements. The lack of testing means that Housing could not always know if wastewater systems were effective. Ineffective systems can result in blockages and even sewage overflows, which can directly impact on community health.

Poor contracting means Housing is not getting full value from the Program Manager and its \$1 million a year fee. The Program Manager is contracted and paid to supervise the Service Providers. However, at times this has not happened and instead the Service Providers deal directly with Housing.

Poor oversight means there is a risk that Housing may have overpaid for services. Self-reporting by Service Providers, a lack of inspections by the Program Manager, and inconsistency in invoice and job order descriptions have created this risk. In 2013-14, invoices for all unplanned maintenance and repairs in the Program totalled \$14.7 million.

Housing does not know if the right communities are in the Program as it has not applied the eligibility criteria since 2008. However, its data show that 24 of 84 communities receiving services no longer meet the population criteria of 50 people. Although it is Cabinet's decision as to which communities should receive services, Housing has a clear role in assessing eligibility to support these decisions. We note that Housing has suspended services to seven of the 91 communities in the Program.

Housing does not have an up-to-date view of the condition of Program assets which have an estimated value of \$765 million. This severely limits its ability to plan effectively for asset maintenance and replacement. In March 2014, Housing began to collect all asset data using its Essential Services Asset Management System (ESAMS) as a means of ensuring consistency. At January 2015, ESAMS included key information for 28 per cent of major assets.

The remoteness of communities directly affects the cost of supporting them but better coordination of maintenance and repair for Program assets and public housing could reduce these costs. Improved planning, information sharing and coordinating by the various service delivery entities would improve efficiency in travel and on site costs, as well as reduce downtime.