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Why government strategies stall

Closing the gap between the plan and the thing people can actually use

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Document control

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Independence statement

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Evidence standards

Every headline finding in this report is attributed to a named, dated, publicly available source. Where we draw on Nuvanta's own engagement experience, we say so. Where the evidence is thin or contested, we say that too. AI tools were used to assist with source discovery, drafting and formatting. No finding in this report rests on AI output alone; every cited source was checked against the original publication before inclusion, and every judgement in the desktop count was reviewed by the author. The full evidence table is published as a companion workbook so that any judgement can be checked or challenged.

Terms used in this report

Term	What we mean by it
Strategy, policy	A strategy states intent and priorities over several years. A policy is a settled position meant to be applied. Both stall at the same point, so the report treats them together.
The gap	The step between a strategy being published and something existing that a person can use: a funded team, a working tool, a running program.
Crossed the gap	Our scoring term for a strategy that, two years after launch, had a named owner, money traceable to it, and either an implementation plan or a progress report.
Flagship, second-tier	Flagship: announced by a Premier or Prime Minister. Second-tier: launched by a portfolio minister, a department or an agency. Most strategies are second-tier.
Delivery vehicle	The thing money is attached to: a budget measure, a funded program, an established team or a funded project.
Implementation plan, action plan	A dated public document that says who will do what by when to deliver the strategy.
Baseline	The measured starting position against which progress is later judged.
Prototype, release	A prototype is a real but deliberately incomplete version of the thing a strategy intends, built early to be tested. A release is each usable version delivered after it.
Business case, budget measure	A business case is the document that asks for funding. A budget measure is a specific funding decision recorded in a government's budget papers.
Mid-term review	A formal check, part way through a program, on whether it is on track and what should change.
Audit offices	The independent auditors of each government: the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO), the Queensland Audit Office (QAO), the Audit Office of New South Wales and the Office of the Auditor General Western Australia.

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Nuvanta Solutions acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and pays respect to Elders past and present.

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Executive summary

Governments are good at writing strategies. They are much less good at the step that comes after. That step, where a published document has to become a funded team, a working tool or a running program, is where most strategies and policies stall. This report looks at why, and what to do.

What to do differently

Do not launch a strategy without a first working thing attached. A strategy without one is a decision that has not yet been made.

Build that thing before the business case, not after, and record the baseline as you build.

Define the owner & the money, then deliver in short releases, something people can use.

39%

Of 75 strategies launched 2022 to 2024 had an owner, funding and a plan or progress report two years on [22]

29%

Of strategies launched by a minister or department were funded and under way, against 61 per cent of those a Premier or Prime Minister announced [22]

53%

Had funding traceable to the strategy. Every single one, by contrast, had named an owner [22]

What we found

Two decades of audit reports describe well-made strategies that then stalled. Our own count of 75 strategies launched between mid 2022 and mid 2024 found that fewer than four in ten were funded and under way two years on, that funding rather than ownership was the missing piece, and that strategies launched by a minister or department were funded and under way at less than half the rate of those announced by a Premier or Prime Minister [22]. It stalls for five reasons.

They are written as documents rather than as things to be built; nobody owns the step after publication; implementation planning arrives late or never; there is nothing to attach money to; and measurement lags activity, so nobody can say whether they are working. Each is set out on the next page. None of these is a failure of will or intelligence. They are structural, and often deliberate: the plan is left out because it would make the number too big for the cabinet submission, or because the launch date was fixed first.

By jurisdiction

The share funded and under way ranges from about a quarter to a half across the six governments; with a dozen strategies each, that is too close to rank anyone, and the pattern is the same everywhere. What differs is how each publishes. The Commonwealth pairs plan and money at launch for Prime Minister-announced strategies, rarely for the rest. New South Wales has the most complete cases and the most owner-only ones. Queensland launches well, reports rarely. Western Australia funds through broad frameworks, so money is hard to trace. South Australia's Premier-led statements are well owned; its portfolio strategies are the thinnest. Victoria has the best-instrumented strategies and some of the emptiest.

Five insights at a glance

The argument of this report in five lines. Each is developed in Section 2 with the audit evidence and the results of our count behind it, and tested in the diagnostic on page 22.

1**A strategy you cannot build is a strategy you can only report against.**

Ambiguous actions produce reassurance, not progress. Most of the strategies in the audit record failed at this point before anything else went wrong.

2**Ownership is a person with a team and a budget line, not a name in a governance diagram.**

Every one of the 75 strategies we counted named an owner. Barely half had money that could be traced to the strategy. Naming is free; funding is the test.

3**Plans written after launch arrive late, if at all.**

Among strategies that published an implementation plan, the median lag from launch was zero months. The ones that did not release it with the strategy mostly never released it.

4**Budgets fund things, not intentions.**

A prototype gives the budget process something it can say yes to. Second-tier strategies, which rarely arrive with a funded thing attached, crossed the gap at 29 per cent against 61 per cent for flagship strategies.

5**Measurement that starts at the end is an inquest.**

Record the baseline while you build the first thing. Two years on, fewer than half of the strategies we counted had published any progress report at all.

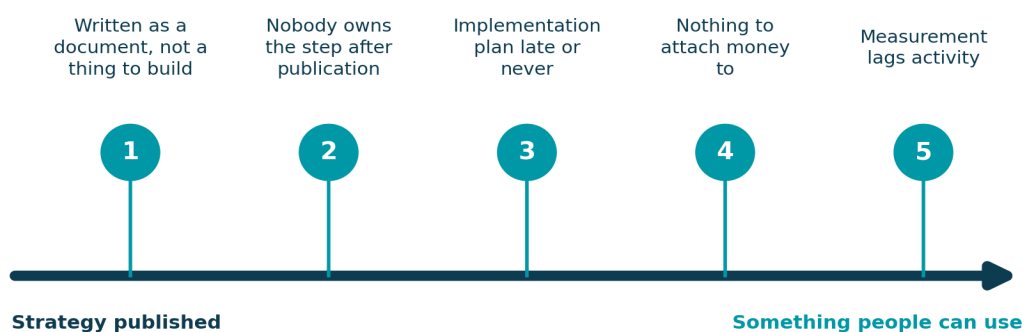


Figure 1. Where strategies stall. The five stall points sit between publication and the first thing people can use.

1. The gap

Strategies are usually well made. What is missing is the step that turns them into something a person can use, and that step is where the audit record and our own count both show them stalling.

Australian governments publish a great many strategies. Every portfolio has at least one, most have several, and councils, statutory bodies and development partners add hundreds more. The documents are usually competent. They rest on real evidence, they have been consulted widely, and the priorities they set are rarely wrong.

What happens next is far less consistent. Between the launch of a strategy and the point where a member of the public, a frontline worker or a partner government experiences something different, there is a step that the strategy itself does not describe. Somebody has to turn intent into a funded team, a working tool, a changed process or a running program. We call this step the gap, and it is where most strategies and policies quietly stall.

Strategy and policy: the same gap, two shapes

This report deals with both strategies and policies because they stall at the same point, though the failure looks different.

- **A strategy** is a statement of intent with priorities and usually a timeframe: a fifty-year forestry plan, a regional economic development strategy, a climate transition plan. It stalls because nothing gets built. The priorities remain priorities.
- **A policy** is a settled position that has cleared the political process and is meant to be applied: a benefit-sharing policy, a records governance policy, a procurement policy. It stalls because it is published and then applied inconsistently or not at all, because nobody built the tool, process or program that makes it usable day to day.

In both cases the document is treated as the deliverable. In both cases the document is only the brief. And in both cases the people closest to it usually know, at launch, that the step after publication has not been designed, funded or owned. This report is about why that keeps happening and what to do instead.



Figure 2. The gap sits between the published strategy and the thing people can use. Most governance, funding and measurement effort is spent on either side of it.

Why we counted what is published

Most of the evidence in this report is secondary: audit reports, and our own count of what governments have published about their strategies. That is a deliberate choice, and it is worth saying why it is the right one here rather than a convenience.

The published record is the strategy as far as anyone outside the department is concerned. A council deciding whether to align its plan with a state strategy, an investor weighing a sector roadmap, a community group reading a benefit-sharing policy, an auditor, a journalist or a Parliament: none of them can see the internal work. They see what was published. If a diligent outsider cannot find an owner, a plan, a budget line or a progress report two years on, then for every practical purpose those things do not exist, whatever is happening inside the building. The count measures the strategy as it is experienced, not as it is intended.

It is reproducible, and it is consistent across jurisdictions. Seventy-five strategies across six governments, launched in the same two-year window and tested against the same five questions from the same kinds of sources, is a wider and more even view than any single audit provides. Every judgement carries a source and an access date, and Appendix A sets out the method in enough detail for anyone to repeat it, challenge a result or extend the frame. Interviews would have told us what officials believe; the published record tells us what they were able to show.

It exposes the visibility gap directly. Several strategies in the count are almost certainly being worked on inside their departments and still score as stalled, because nothing about that work has been made public. That is not a flaw in the method. It is a finding. A strategy that is progressing invisibly is one that cannot be built on by anyone else, cannot be held to account, and will be audited later on exactly the evidence we looked for.

What the auditors keep finding

Australia's audit offices have been describing this gap for a long time. In 2013 the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) wrote that weaknesses in applying cross-government strategies, and in measuring their performance in a timely way, were consistent and repeated themes across its audits tabled between 2006 and 2012 [1]. A decade later the findings had not changed. The Queensland Audit Office (QAO) found in 2023 that Queensland Health had released a 23-year cultural capability framework in 2010 and had not delivered a single implementation plan since [3]. The Audit Office of New South Wales found in the same year that the state's Rural and Remote Education Strategy had no implementation plan, no timeframes, no dedicated team for over a year and, two years after release, nothing to report on its impact [2].

The Commonwealth picture is similar. The Australian National Audit Office's (ANAO) 2022 audit of the National Waste Policy Action Plan found that most of its 80 actions were ambiguously worded and open to interpretation, with no objective metric against which progress could be assessed [4]. Its performance statements program has found that developing a working set of performance measures can take several years of consistent effort [7], and that whole-of-government data maturity was still at best developing in 2024 [8].

These are not isolated failures. They are what the system produces when a document is the end point.

What our own count found

To test whether the audit picture holds for recent strategies, we ran a structured desktop count of 75 strategies launched between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2024 across the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, and checked each two years on against five tests: a named owner, a public implementation plan within twelve months, a funded delivery vehicle (a budget measure, program or team) traceable to the strategy, a published baseline (the starting position against which change is measured), and a progress report within two years. A strategy crossed the gap if it had an owner, funding, and either a plan or a progress report. The method and full results are in Appendix A [22].

Twenty-nine of the 75, or 39 per cent, crossed. Twenty-eight were partial and eighteen had passed one test or none. Two findings stand out.

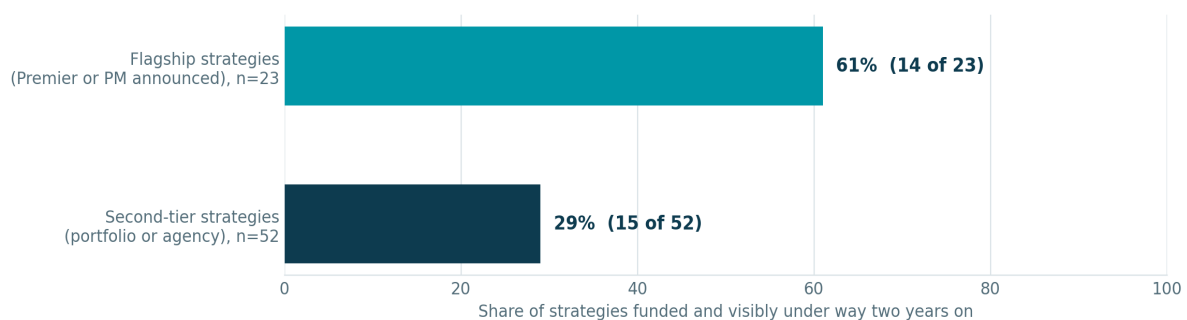


Figure 3. Share of strategies funded and visibly under way two years on, by tier. Nuvanta desktop count of 75 strategies, September 2026 [22].

Tier decides more than jurisdiction. Flagship strategies, those announced by a Premier or Prime Minister, crossed at 61 per cent. Second-tier strategies, those launched by a portfolio minister, a department or an agency, make up most of what governments publish and crossed at 29 per cent. A workforce strategy, a sector plan or a trade strategy launched by a portfolio minister is, on this evidence, less than half as likely to be funded and delivered as one launched from the Premier's office, a gap of 32 percentage points, and every one of the eighteen strategies that failed outright was second-tier. The gap held, and slightly widened, each time the sample was extended and weighted further towards second-tier strategies.

Part of this is definitional, and it is worth saying so. A Premier announcing a strategy usually means the budget has already been settled, so for flagship strategies the announcement and the funding are often the same event. The finding is therefore less about the competence of departments than about where governments direct attention and money: the strategies that get a Premier get a budget line, and the rest are expected to find one later. The sensitivity analysis in Appendix A makes the same point from the other direction: if every strategy whose funding could not be found is assumed to be funded, the tier gap halves. Roughly half of it is a funding gap and half a visibility gap, and both are real.

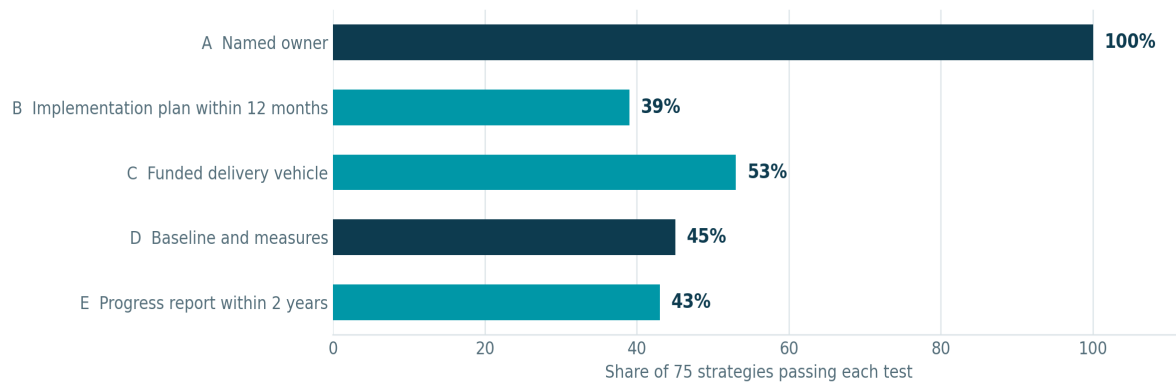


Figure 4. Pass rate by test, Nuvanta desktop count of 75 strategies, September 2026 [22].

The chokepoint is money, not ownership. Every one of the 75 strategies named an owner. Only 39 per cent published an implementation plan within a year, only 43 per cent had reported progress within two years, and only 53 per cent had a funded delivery vehicle that could be traced to the strategy in budget papers or annual reports. Among strategies that did publish a plan, the median lag was zero months: the ones that had a plan released it with the strategy. The ones that did not release it at launch mostly did not release it at all.

The count was built in four passes and reached the 75 strategies we set out to sample. Near misses were re-checked against annual reports and budget papers, the first thirty strategies were re-scored on progress reporting against the final definition, and three flagged facts were checked before the figures were finalised, so the percentages carry a margin of a few points either way. The direction is not in doubt: it held when the second and third passes were weighted deliberately towards second-tier strategies and the thinner jurisdictions, and it matches what the auditors have been saying since 2006.

Patterns by jurisdiction

Readers inside government will want to know how their own jurisdiction fared. The short answer is that the share of strategies that were funded and visibly under way two years on (an owner, money traceable to the strategy, and a plan or progress report) ranges from 23 per cent in New South Wales to 50 per cent in Queensland and Victoria, with the Commonwealth at 42, South Australia at 38 and Western Australia at 31. At twelve or thirteen strategies per jurisdiction, those differences are three or four strategies wide and should not be read as a ranking. The variation between jurisdictions is smaller than the variation between tiers within each of them. What does differ between governments is how they publish, and that produces six recognisable patterns.

Jurisdiction	n	Funded, under way	The pattern in one line
Commonwealth	12	42%	Plan and money arrive on launch day for Prime Minister-announced strategies, and rarely for the rest
New South Wales	13	23%	The most complete cases and the most owner-only documents; money is sometimes announced before the strategy

Jurisdiction	n	Funded, under way	The pattern in one line
Queensland	12	50%	Strong at launch, with an action plan and a dollar figure, and quieter on progress two years on
Western Australia	13	31%	Funds through broad frameworks, so real money is often untraceable to the strategy from outside
South Australia	13	38%	Premier-led statements well owned and reported; portfolio strategies among the thinnest in the count
Victoria	12	50%	The best-instrumented strategies in the sample, alongside the clearest documents without a thing attached

Table 1. Share of strategies funded and visibly under way two years on, and the publishing pattern, by jurisdiction. Nuvanta desktop count of 75 strategies [22]. Samples are too small to rank governments; the patterns are the useful part.

Commonwealth

What went well. Flagship strategies arrived with plan and money on launch day: the Cyber Security Strategy with its Horizon 1 action plan and \$586.9 million, the National Defence Strategy with the Integrated Investment Program, the Migration Strategy with a dated roadmap. Revive, the national cultural policy, followed with budget measures and a first-year progress report. The Commonwealth is the only jurisdiction in which publishing the plan and the money together is visible as a habit.

What did not. The habit stops at the flagship tier. The Quantum, Battery and Agricultural Traceability strategies each have money or a plan but not both: the Battery Strategy has \$523 million attached and, two years on, no published plan or progress report; the National Health and Climate Strategy has a named unit, a dated implementation plan and a progress report but no money that can be traced to it; Traceability took over a year to publish its plan [29]. The Commonwealth knows how to get a strategy funded and moving, and does it for the strategies the Prime Minister announces.

New South Wales

What went well. Two of the most complete cases in the count: the Housing and Infrastructure Plan, with \$2.2 billion in the 2023–24 Budget and targets that followed within a year [23], and the Closing the Gap Change and Transformation Strategy, with a \$715.8 million four-year measure, an implementation plan, baselines and an annual report to Parliament [31]. The Litter Prevention Strategy, a modest second-tier document, crossed on a \$38 million program and published targets.

What did not. The most owner-only documents of any jurisdiction, concentrated in the regional and social portfolios: the Regional Investment Attraction Strategy, the REDS update, the Consumer Energy Strategy, Creative Communities and the Biosecurity and Food Safety Strategy each name a lead and little else that can be found. And a distinctive failure in which the headline money was announced before the strategy existed [26]. Many of these documents are frameworks or statements of direction; labelling them as such would improve the state's result without changing a single program.

Queensland

What went well. Nearly every Queensland strategy in the count launched with an action plan and a dollar figure: the Energy and Jobs Plan, Homes for Queenslanders, Communities 2032 and the Workforce Strategy all had both on day one [28]. The ministerial media statement is in practice the funding record, which makes Queensland the easiest jurisdiction to trace from outside.

What did not. Progress reporting. Towards Tourism 2032, the Renewable Energy Zone Roadmap, the Trade and Investment Strategy and the Digital Economy action plan all sit at partial for the same reason: no progress report could be found two years on, and the 2024 Small Business Strategy, with \$250 million attached, has published neither a plan nor a progress report since the change of government. Queensland is good at the launch and quieter afterwards, which is the easiest of the six patterns to fix.

Western Australia

What went well. Where a figure was attached to the strategy by name, WA delivered and reported: the Climate Adaptation Strategy (almost \$40 million, 37 dated actions, a progress statement), the Seniors Strategy (action plan the same day) [27], the Digital Strategy Roadmap (annually updated, funded from the Digital Capability Fund) and the road safety action plan.

What did not. The most partial results of any jurisdiction, almost all for one reason. WA funds through broad frameworks such as Diversify WA, the Digital Capability Fund and Tourism WA's base budget, so the money is real but cannot be traced to the strategy from outside; WAVES 2033, the Screen Industry Strategy and the Battery and Critical Minerals Strategy all sit at partial on that account, and the Cruise Tourism plan sits at partial because its annual reports track the sector rather than the plan. Western Australia's problem is visibility more than delivery, and it is the jurisdiction most likely to be undercounted here.

South Australia

What went well. Premier-led statements are well owned and reported on: the Economic Statement with its Economic Development Board and annual reporting, and the Housing Roadmap with \$1.5 billion, dated milestones and a first annual report. Two second-tier strategies stood out for doing it properly: the Road Safety Strategy with an action plan, a funded grants program and annual reports, and the Autism Strategy with a funded office and an action plan.

What did not. Portfolio strategies in trade, small business and security are the thinnest documents in the whole count: an owner and nothing else that can be found. South Australia also provides the count's one funded-then-defunded case, the Hydrogen Jobs Plan, deferred with its funds redirected to the Whyalla steelworks and its office dissolved [25]. A budget line is necessary and not sufficient.

Victoria

What went well. The best-instrumented strategies in the sample are Victorian: the Central and Gippsland water strategy with a numbered action list and two published progress reports, the Health Workforce Strategy with plan and money at launch and a review cadence [21], Our Equal State with a 110-action plan and an outcomes framework, and the Housing Statement with three named funds announced the same week [24].

What did not. Victoria also produces the clearest documents without a thing attached: the Biosecurity Strategy, whose implementation plan was still in draft a year on, and Experience Victoria 2033, whose funding rests on a recovery package that predates it [30]. The Clean Economy Workforce Strategy was funded but never published the plan it promised. When Victoria does the work it publishes it well; the gap is between strategies rather than within them.

2. Five reasons strategies stall

Five causes recur across two decades of audit findings and 75 recent strategies. They compound, and a strategy that suffers one usually suffers several.

Reading across the audit evidence and the count, five reasons recur. Each is set out below with a one-line insight, the audit findings behind it, and where the count adds something, the numbers.

2.1 The strategy is written as a document, not as a thing to be built

A strategy you cannot build is a strategy you can only report against.

Most strategies describe outcomes and priorities. Very few describe the first concrete thing that will exist as a result. The ANAO's finding on the National Waste Policy Action Plan is the clearest statement of the problem: 80 actions, most of them worded so broadly that the auditor could not tell whether an action reported as delivered had in fact been completed [4]. The department was later found to have changed an action's status from delivered back to on track because its scope could be more broadly interpreted [4].

The NSW Rural and Remote Education Strategy had the same feature. It carried an overall timeframe of 2021 to 2024 but did not say when its vision, goals or actions were expected to be achieved, and the Auditor-General described it as largely a rehash of existing programs with no new solutions [2].

A strategy written this way cannot be built, because there is nothing specific enough to build. It can only be reported against, and reporting against ambiguity produces reassurance rather than progress.

2.2 Nobody owns the step after publication

Ownership is a person with a team and a budget line, not a name in a governance diagram.

Strategies name lead agencies. They rarely give those agencies the authority, the people or the cross-government mandate to act. VAGO's 2013 audit of Victoria's 2006 tourism strategy found that the lead agency, Tourism Victoria, delivered well in its own core business and faltered wherever success depended on other agencies. The advisory council that was meant to provide whole-of-government leadership was never appointed, and the government took more than a year to decide

it did not need one. Tourism Victoria then assumed the leadership role without, in the auditor's words, the authority, reach or governance structures to support it [1].

The Western Australian Auditor General found the same pattern in the state's waste strategy in 2016: agency roles were unclear, which led to poor planning and reporting and delays in funding [5]. In New South Wales, the Regional, Rural and Remote Policy unit was announced alongside the education strategy, but no dedicated team was in place at launch and it took more than a year to staff it, which the Auditor-General judged not fast enough for a four-year strategy [2].

Ownership is not a name in a governance diagram. It is a person with a team, a budget line and the standing to ask other agencies for things.

2.3 Implementation planning arrives late or never

Plans written after launch arrive months or years late, if at all. Write the first release before you publish.

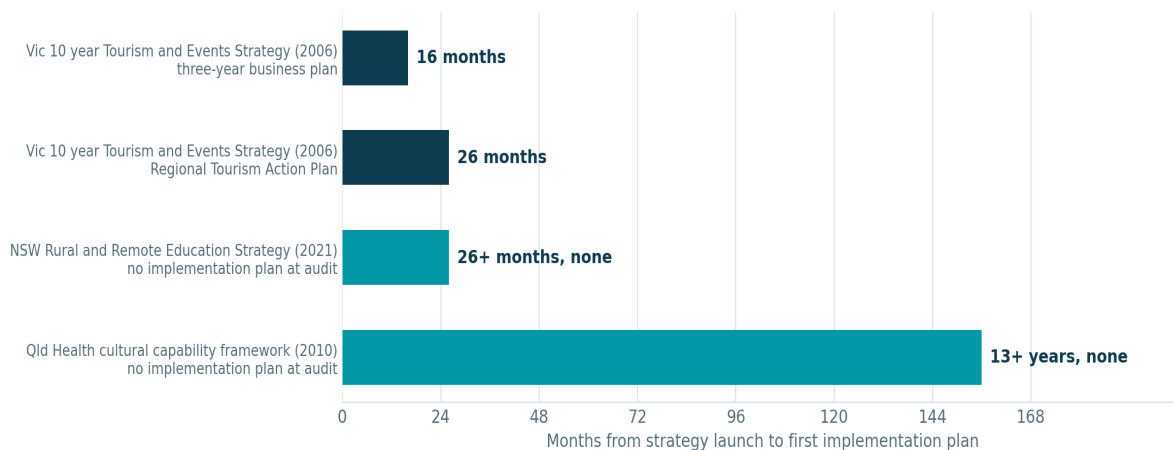


Figure 5. Time from strategy launch to first implementation plan in four audited cases. Sources: VAGO 2013 [1]; Audit Office of NSW 2023 [2]; QAO 2023 [3]. Bars for NSW and Queensland show elapsed time at the date of audit; no plan existed.

The most common single finding is the absence of an implementation plan, or its arrival long after launch. The Victorian tourism case is instructive because the department did have a detailed plan in February 2006, four months before the intended launch. Government chose a different approach, the plan was set aside, and the three-year business plan that was meant to replace it was published eleven months late. The regional action plan took more than two years [1].

Queensland Health's 2010 cultural capability framework committed to regular implementation plans with strategies, timeframes, budgets and performance indicators. None were delivered in thirteen years, and an independent review in 2018 that recommended fixing this was not formally actioned [3]. The NSW education strategy had no implementation plan at all, which the auditor found made it difficult for executives to know whether the strategy was on track [2].

The pattern is not historical. Victoria's Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy 2023–2033 was launched by the minister in June 2023 as a ten-year planning and investment framework [18]. Five months later the government's own skills plan update recorded that the implementation plan was under development [19]. As at September 2026 no implementation plan for the strategy has

been published. The Commonwealth's National Agricultural Traceability Strategy 2023–2033 shows the milder version: endorsed by agriculture ministers in May 2023, its implementation plan is dated September 2024 and was launched that November, fourteen to sixteen months later [29]. Money did follow, through skills budget measures and the SEC Centre of Training Excellence, and the strategy is reported on inside the annual Skills Plan updates, which is why it counts as having crossed the gap in our desktop count [22]. But it crossed without ever publishing the plan it promised, and progress on it is visible only as a line item inside another document. That is a common shape: funded, owned, and still hard for anyone outside the department to say what it has delivered.

Commonwealth guidance is clear that this should not happen. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) requires an implementation plan for new policy proposals with significant risk, with milestones, senior responsible officers and risk treatments [6]. The joint PM&C and ANAO better practice guide has argued since 2006 that early, structured implementation planning reduces the risk of delay to, and dilution of, outcomes [17]. The guidance exists. It is the follow-through that is missing.

2.4 There is nothing to attach money to

Budgets fund things, not intentions. A prototype gives the budget process something it can say yes to.

Budget processes fund things that can be costed, scheduled and held to account. A strategy is not yet such a thing. The Victorian tourism approach made this explicit: publish the ten-year strategy first, then develop three-year plans and use those as the basis for funding bids [1]. When the three-year plans slipped, so did the funding, and the auditor recorded that no statewide significant infrastructure projects had been delivered under the strategy [1].

The NSW Natural Resources Commission's 2019 audits of eleven Local Land Services strategic plans found regions delivering in line with their plans but constrained by limited funding, which had already affected outcomes and was expected to keep doing so [16]. The strategies were sound. They had simply not been converted into anything a budget could recognise.

Our own count confirms that money is the binding constraint in recent strategies. All 75 named an owner; 40 had funding traceable to the strategy [22]. It also shows the most common way a stalled strategy can look funded. The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027 was launched in December 2022 with a Women's Safety Commissioner as owner and annual report cards since; its headline refuge investment of \$426.6 million, however, had been announced in October 2021, more than a year before the plan existed [26]. Money that predates the strategy is money the strategy did not win, and it will not follow the strategy's priorities. The plan counts as partial for that reason. Experience Victoria 2033, the state's ten-year visitor economy strategy, has the same shape: its funding rests on a recovery package announced before the strategy existed, and no money traceable to the strategy itself could be found [30]. The strategies that crossed had, almost without exception, a budget measure or a named fund attached at launch: the NSW Housing and Infrastructure Plan with \$2.2 billion in the 2023–24 Budget [23], Victoria's Housing Statement with three named funds announced the same week [24], and the 2024 National Defence Strategy released on the same day as its Integrated Investment Program. The one strategy in the count that was funded and still failed

is instructive in a different way: South Australia's Hydrogen Jobs Plan had \$593 million, a dedicated office and a delivery contract, and was deferred in February 2025 with the funds redirected to the Whyalla steelworks; the office was dissolved three months later [25]. A funded vehicle can still be driven off the road. An unfunded one never leaves the depot.

Grattan Institute's 2021 analysis of a decade of its own reform proposals found that more than two thirds had not been adopted [12]. Not all of those are implementation failures, but the study is a reminder that a good idea on paper has no natural momentum. Something has to carry it.

2.5 Measurement lags activity, so nobody can tell whether it is working

Measurement that starts at the end is an inquest. Record the baseline while you build the first thing.

Of 14 priority areas in Victoria's 2006 tourism strategy, the evaluation framework could measure outcomes for:



Figure 6. VAGO's assessment of Tourism Victoria's evaluation framework, 2013 [1].

Auditors consistently find that baselines and indicators are set late, if at all. VAGO's 2013 review recorded that agencies repeatedly failed to identify suitable indicators early enough and did not collect enough baseline data to track outcomes [1]. Tourism Victoria's evaluation framework was rated adequate for one of fourteen priority areas [1]. The ANAO has observed that building a valid, reliable set of performance measures can take several years of consistent work [7].

This matters beyond accountability. Without early measurement there is no feedback loop, so a strategy cannot be corrected while it is still cheap to correct. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), in its 2025 review of its own evaluations, put it plainly: a high-quality plan did not guarantee a high-quality report, and monitoring and follow-through during implementation are critical [15]. Its own standards require mid-term reviews precisely to catch drift while it can still be fixed [14].

Measurement that starts at the end is not measurement. It is an inquest.

3. What the exceptions did differently

The strategies that crossed share a shape: a small unit that owned the step after publication, and a plan and money that arrived with the document rather than after it.

The audit literature is mostly a record of what went wrong, but it also records what worked, and the exceptions share a shape.

What made the difference was never the quality of the recommendation. It was the presence of someone whose job it was to close it.

3.1 A small, empowered unit that owns the step after publication

The Audit Office of NSW found in 2018 that the Premier's Implementation Unit was effective in helping agencies make progress against the Premier's Priorities, using a systematic approach to measuring and reporting progress [13]. The auditor's criticisms were about the transparency of public reporting, not about whether the model moved outcomes. The unit had a small number of clearly stated targets, a mandate that crossed portfolios, and a routine of measurement that started at launch rather than at the end.

Status of 279 accepted recommendations from VAGO audits tabled in 2017–18, as reported by agencies



Figure 7. Agency-reported status of accepted VAGO recommendations from 2017–18 audits, as at 2020 [10]. Recommendations get closed when someone is tracking them.

VAGO's 2020 review of how Victorian agencies respond to audit recommendations points the same way. Agencies with governance that actively tracked recommendations reported most of them complete, while a minority without that routine lagged [10]. What made the difference was not the quality of the recommendation but the presence of someone whose job it was to close it.

3.2 Attention to implementation equal to attention to the decision

Peter Shergold's 2015 review, *Learning from Failure*, was commissioned after the Home Insulation Program Royal Commission to examine why large government initiatives go wrong [11]. His central point has aged well: it is no use having a decision on a policy without giving equal attention to the detail of its implementation. The review argued for adaptive government, where programs are designed to be adjusted as they are delivered rather than fixed at announcement.

3.3 The plan published on launch day

It is possible to do this properly, and a recent Victorian example shows what it looks like. When the Department of Health released the ten-year Victorian Health Workforce Strategy in February 2024, it

published the 2024 to 2026 action plan alongside it, named \$15.3 million for the initiatives that implement the strategy, and committed to an annual review and a refreshed action plan every two years [21]. Whether the strategy succeeds is not yet known. What is known is that it left the launch with an owner, a dated plan, a budget line and a review cadence, which is more than most strategies in the audit record ever had.

The count found the same shape below the flagship tier, which matters because second-tier strategies are where most of the stalling happens. The WA State Seniors Strategy 2023–2033 launched with its 2023–2027 action plan on the same day and a budget allocation [27]. The Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032 launched with a 33-action plan, \$70 million in new and expanded initiatives, and has published two progress updates since [28]. Neither was announced by a Premier. Both crossed. So did the NSW Closing the Gap Change and Transformation Strategy, released by Aboriginal Affairs NSW in 2023 against a \$715.8 million four-year budget measure, with an implementation plan, baselines against the nineteen targets and an annual report to Parliament [31]. The difference between these and the second-tier strategies that stalled was not seniority of sponsor; it was that the plan and the money arrived with the document.

3.4 Something concrete, early

The exceptions in Nuvanta's own experience share one more feature that the audit reports touch on only indirectly. In each case, a working version of the strategy's intent existed within months of the decision to act, before the full business case, before the full funding and before the organisation had committed to a delivery model. That early working version did three things at once: it forced the ambiguity out of the strategy, it gave a budget process something to fund, and it produced a baseline.

Three anonymised examples follow in Section 4. They are not offered as proof. They are offered as a pattern that matches what the auditors describe when they describe success.

Why prototypes change the conversation

A strategy asks executives to imagine an outcome. A prototype asks them to react to one. Reactions are faster, more specific and more honest than imagination, and they turn a thirty-page document into a two-page list of decisions.

4. Three cases from Nuvanta's delivery experience

Three engagements in which a document that could have stayed a document became a tool, a workstream and a governance strategy. Offered as a pattern, not as proof.

These cases are drawn from Nuvanta engagements between 2025 and 2026. Client identities are withheld. Each is included because it illustrates the gap being crossed, and each involved a document that could easily have stayed a document.

4.1 A fifty-year plan that became a tool in a few months

Context. A Queensland primary industries agency held a long-horizon strategy for a state timber resource. The strategy was credible and well supported. It also had no delivery vehicle, and its growth and yield assumptions lived in spreadsheets that only a few specialists could operate.

What happened. Rather than write a business case for a modelling program, Nuvanta built a working prototype of the modelling tool within a few months: a thing the agency's executives could click on. The first question they asked was not about the model. It was whether they could change an assumption and see the forest respond. That question, and the dozen that followed it, did more to define the program than any workshop had. The prototype went through four human-centred design cycles with the people who would use it and scored 8.2 out of 10 on the final review.

Result. The prototype became the anchor for a three-year roadmap that is now moving to funding, with Nuvanta delivering. The strategy did not change. What changed was that it now had a thing attached to it, and the thing could be costed, owned and measured.

4.2 Research that became a funded workstream

Context. A New South Wales energy agency was working on benefit-sharing arrangements for renewable energy zones. Policy intent existed. What did not exist was a usable set of models that regional staff and communities could apply.

What happened. Nuvanta published an independent research report on equity and revenue-sharing models, together with three practical toolkits: a readiness diagnostic, a model selector and a deal checklist. The agency bought the report on a corporate card, which is worth noting because it meant no procurement process stood between the policy team and the first usable thing. Within weeks the conversation had moved from whether to build the models to which ones to build first.

Result. A policy position became a funded modelling workstream with a named lead inside the agency and a quarterly research cadence. The research was not the outcome. It was the first concrete thing, and it gave the policy somewhere to go.

4.3 A procurement that became a governance strategy

Context. A Western Australian statutory fund needed to procure a records management system. The procurement was straightforward. The underlying problem was not: the organisation had obligations under state records legislation and no settled position on how it would meet them.

What happened. Nuvanta built a compliance requirements matrix as part of the procurement, which made the governance gap visible and specific. The matrix became the basis for a records governance strategy, and the procurement became one of that strategy's delivery actions rather than a stand-alone purchase.

Result. The organisation now has a policy it can apply, a system it can apply it with, and a single owner for both. The procurement did not get bigger. It got a purpose.

The common thread

In all three cases the first move was to build something specific and usable before asking for the full commitment. The built thing then did the work that strategies usually leave to governance: it clarified scope, created ownership, gave a budget something to fund and produced a baseline.

5. Closing the gap: the Nuvanta Pathway

Prototype, fund, deliver: three established practices applied in a fixed order at the moment a strategy is published, and a ten-question diagnostic to apply to the one on your desk.

The approach below is not new in its parts. Delivery units, adaptive programs and prototyping are all established practice. What is less common is combining them in a fixed order and applying them at the moment a strategy is published rather than after it has stalled.

The prototype is the business case. It converts a document into a costed roadmap with a first release already in hand, which is a far easier thing for a budget process to say yes to.

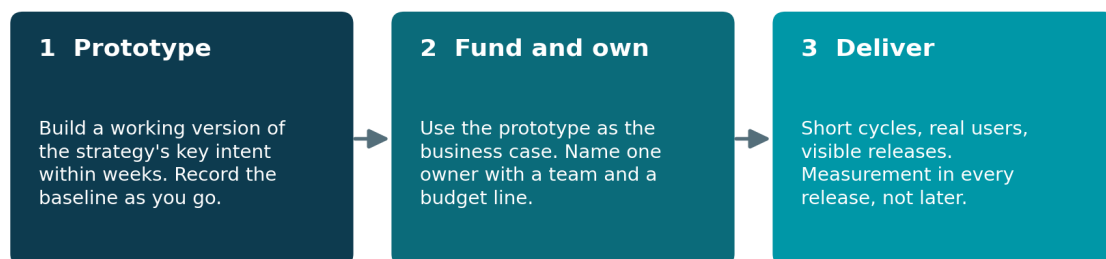


Figure 8. The Nuvanta Pathway. Three steps in a fixed order, applied at the moment a strategy is published.

Step 1. Prototype the strategy as something people can use

Within weeks of a strategy being approved, build a working version of its most important intent: a prototype, in the sense of something real but deliberately incomplete. That may be a tool, a process run end-to-end with real cases, a pilot program in one site, or a decision model that executives can operate. The test is that a person outside the strategy team can use it and react to it.

- Pick the intent that, if it worked, would make the rest of the strategy credible.
- Build it with the people who will use it, and revise it with them. Several short cycles beat one long one.
- Record the baseline as part of building it. If the prototype cannot measure the starting position, it is not finished.

What it looked like. For the timber strategy in Section 4, the prototype was a working growth and yield model with a browser front end, built in a few months by two people, that let executives change a planting assumption and watch a fifty-year forecast move. It was not the production tool. It was enough to make the strategy's central claim testable, and the baseline it produced (current estate, current yield curve) became the reference point for everything that followed.

Step 2. Use the prototype to secure funding and ownership

The prototype is the business case. It converts the strategy's ambiguity into a costed roadmap with a first working release already in hand, which is a far easier thing for a budget process to say yes to than a document.

- Name one accountable owner with a team, however small, and a budget line.
- Write the roadmap in releases, not phases. Each release is something people can use.
- Set the mid-term review date before the funding is approved, and say what a bad result would trigger.

What it looked like. The funding ask that followed was not a business case for a modelling program. It was a three-year roadmap in six-monthly releases, each described as a thing users would be able to do, with the prototype attached as release zero and its cost as the unit of estimate. The first question from the budget side was not whether the program was worth doing but whether the second release could come sooner. That is the conversation a prototype buys.

Step 3. Deliver in short cycles with measurement built in

Delivery should look like the prototype stage did, only larger: short cycles, real users, visible progress. Measurement is part of every release, not a separate workstream that starts later.

- Report on the thing, not on the strategy. What exists now that did not exist three months ago?
- Use the mid-term review to change course, not to defend the original plan.
- Retire actions that are no longer needed. A strategy with fewer live actions is usually a healthier one.

What it looked like. For the benefit-sharing work in Section 4, delivery meant releasing one model at a time to the regional staff who would use it, collecting what they asked for, and reporting each quarter on what now existed rather than on activity. The second model changed materially because of what the first one taught. That is the point of releases.

When the Pathway does not fit

The approach has limits and it is better to name them than to have a reader find them.

- **When the first thing is legislation.** Some strategies cannot produce anything usable until a bill passes. The prototype in that case is a process run on paper with real cases, or a regulatory sandbox; it is weaker, and the stall risk is correspondingly higher.
- **When the prototype needs the money it is meant to win.** Capital-heavy strategies, such as the SA Hydrogen Jobs Plan, cannot be prototyped at a fraction of their cost. The Pathway still

applies to the enabling work, the demand model, the offtake process, but it will not de-risk the capital decision.

- **When a prototype creates commitment to the wrong thing.** A working thing is persuasive, and that cuts both ways. The safeguard is the mid-term review date and the trigger agreed before funding, so that a prototype that has stopped teaching anything can be retired without the program being called a failure.
- **When the strategy should not be delivered.** Some strategies are published to signal a position rather than to change anything, and everyone involved knows it. The Pathway will not help those, and neither will anything else; the honest course is to label them as statements of direction and stop counting them as delivery commitments.

A ten-question diagnostic

Apply these to any strategy or policy on your desk. A no on three or more of the first five is a strong sign the strategy will stall. A no on three or more of the second five is a sign it already has.

#	Question	Yes	No
1	Can you name the first concrete thing that will exist because of this strategy?		
2	Does one named person own the step after publication, with a team and a budget line?		
3	Is there a dated implementation plan, or a release roadmap, that existed at launch?		
4	Has a budget process been asked to fund something specific, not the strategy as a whole?		
5	Was a baseline recorded before or at launch for the outcomes the strategy claims?		
6	Twelve months on, can you point to something a person outside the strategy team can use?		
7	Are progress reports about things delivered, rather than activities undertaken?		
8	Has the mid-term review date been set, and what it would trigger agreed?		
9	Have any actions been retired or changed since launch?		
10	Could an auditor tell, from the evidence you hold, whether the strategy is working?		

Figure 9. Strategy readiness diagnostic. Questions 1 to 5 test whether the gap has been planned for. Questions 6 to 10 test whether it has been crossed.

6. The author's view

Where the evidence ends and my reading of it begins.

This section is opinion. It is my reading of the evidence after ten years of working in the gap as an adviser to federal, state and local government, first at a large firm and now at Nuvanta, and it is separated from the findings so that readers can take one without the other.

Strategy has become a way of not deciding

A published strategy feels like an achievement. It is launched, photographed and filed. But in too many cases the strategy is the moment the organisation stops deciding rather than the moment it starts. Every hard choice about what to build first, who will own it and what will be cut to pay for it is deferred to an implementation plan that, as the evidence shows, may never come. I have come to think of a strategy without a first working thing attached as a decision that has not yet been made.

The gap is often built in upstream, on purpose

It would be convenient to blame capability. In my experience the gap is usually created earlier and deliberately. The cabinet submission leaves out the implementation plan because a costed plan would have made the number too big to get through. The launch date is fixed by the minister's calendar, or the election calendar, and the plan is promised for later. The ministerial office asks for the strategy to be kept high level, which is another way of saying nobody has to commit to anything. None of the people involved are behaving badly. They are responding to a system in which the announcement is rewarded and the delivery is somebody else's problem. Any fix that ignores this will fail. That is one reason I favour the prototype: it is a way of getting something real through those constraints rather than fighting them, because a working thing that already exists is much harder to leave out of the submission than a plan that does not.

The consulting industry is part of the problem, and I include us

Advisory firms are paid to produce documents, and we are good at it. The incentives point at the strategy, the roadmap and the business case, not at the tool, the pilot or the running team. I do not think that is dishonest, but I do think it is the wrong place to stop, and Nuvanta has changed its own model as a result. If a brief asks only for a document, we now ask what the first working thing will be and price for that as well. Some clients decline. That is a useful signal about whether the strategy is meant to happen.

Small teams that own something beat large programs that own everything

The exceptions in the audit record are small, named, empowered units with a short list of things to move [13]. The failures are large, diffuse and shared. My experience matches this. A team of four with one prototype and a budget line will outrun a program office of forty with a portfolio of initiatives, because the small team has to ship something to justify its existence and the large one only has to report.

Audit committees should treat a strategy without a thing as a risk

Auditors are already describing this pattern; the finding is decades old [1]. The gap is that it is treated as an observation about a strategy rather than as a standing risk on an entity's register. If audit committees asked, at launch, for the first concrete deliverable, its owner and its baseline, a large share of the audit findings cited in this report would never have been written.

What I would change tomorrow

- No strategy is launched without a named owner, a dated first release and a baseline. If those three things do not exist, the launch waits.
- Budget processes accept prototypes as business cases, and treat a working release as stronger evidence than a forecast.
- Mid-term reviews ask one question first: what now exists that a person outside the strategy team can use?
- Advisory briefs ask for the first working thing alongside the document, and pay for it.

None of this requires new legislation or new money. It requires treating the document as the brief, not the deliverable.

7. What this means for you

Practical implications for departments, councils, development partners and anyone commissioning a strategy.

A request that arrives with something working attached is treated as a delivery decision. A request that arrives with a document is treated as a policy decision, and policy decisions wait.

7.1 Departments and agencies

The strategies most at risk are the whole-of-government ones, where the lead agency depends on others. The evidence from Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales is that naming a lead is not enough [1] [5] [2]. If you lead such a strategy, secure three things before launch: a small team with cross-agency standing, one prototype that other agencies can see and use, and a budget submission for that prototype's next release. If you cannot get those, delay the launch. A strategy launched without them will be audited on them later.

The usual objection is that the central agency will not fund a team for a strategy that has not started. That is true, and it is why the sequence matters. Do not ask for the team first. Find the two or three people already in the building who would build the first thing anyway, protect a small amount of existing operating budget, and build it. Then take the built thing to the central agency, with its baseline, and ask for the team to deliver the next release. In my experience a request that arrives

with something working attached is treated as a delivery decision. A request that arrives with a document is treated as a policy decision, and policy decisions wait.

If you lead a second-tier strategy, the count has a blunt message: on current form it has roughly a one in three chance of being funded and delivered, and the eighteen strategies in our count that failed every test but ownership were all second-tier [22]. Either get it sponsored at flagship level with a budget line attached, build the first thing inside existing resources so it earns that sponsorship, or be honest that it is a statement of direction rather than a delivery commitment and label it that way. What does not work is publishing it as a ten-year strategy and hoping.

7.2 Councils and regional bodies

Economic development, climate transition and asset strategies at the local level face the same gap with fewer resources. The Local Land Services audits show regions delivering to plan and still constrained by funding [16]. The practical answer is to make the strategy's first action a fundable thing, such as a pilot, a dataset or a tool, and to write the strategy so that grant programs and partner agencies can recognise it as something they can co-fund. A council strategy whose first year is entirely consultation is a strategy that has deferred the gap by a year.

7.3 Development partners and Pacific programs

Development programs have the advantage of structured mid-term reviews and explicit monitoring standards [14]. They have the disadvantage that partner-government strategies and policies often exist on paper with limited capacity behind them, and DFAT's own review found that planning quality did not guarantee follow-through [15]. A mid-term review that assesses progress against the original design will usually find drift. A mid-term review that asks what now exists that a partner official or community can use will find the gap directly, and will produce recommendations the next phase can act on.

7.4 Anyone commissioning a strategy

Change the brief. Ask for the first working thing alongside the document, and ask for a baseline. A consultant or internal team that can only deliver the document has not been asked the right question.

8. Method and limitations

How the evidence was gathered, and where it is thin.

This is a secondary research publication. Its evidence base is published performance audits and reviews from the Australian National Audit Office, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, the Queensland Audit Office, the Audit Office of New South Wales and the Office of the Auditor General Western Australia, together with the Shergold review, Grattan Institute's reform analysis, DFAT's evaluation standards and its 2025 evaluation quality review, and the NSW Natural Resources Commission's strategic plan audits. All sources were accessed and checked against the original publication in September 2026.

Three limitations should be stated. First, audit reports are a biased sample: auditors select topics where risk is judged high, so the literature over-represents strategies that struggled. We have tried to offset this by drawing on audits that record success as well as failure. Second, the desktop count in Appendix A reached its target of 75 strategies in four passes; the second, third and fourth were deliberately weighted to the thinner jurisdictions and to second-tier strategies to correct the flagship skew of the first, and the tier gap widened slightly each time. Where evidence could not be found the test was marked unclear rather than failed, which means the true crossing rate may be somewhat higher than 39 per cent; five strategies scored as near misses on that account were re-checked and three moved to crossed, which is reflected in the figures. The tier gap would not close on that account, since the remaining unclear results sit mostly in second-tier strategies. Third, Section 6 is the author's opinion and is labelled as such. Fourth, the case examples in Section 4 are Nuvanta's own work, described by Nuvanta. They illustrate the pattern; they do not test it.

Objections we expect, and our answers

Audits over-sample failure, so the picture is too dark. Partly true, which is why the count exists. The count sampled from publication lists rather than from audit reports, and it found a lower crossing rate than the audits alone would suggest, not a higher one.

Crossing the gap is a low bar. It is. An owner, traceable funding and either a plan or a progress report is the minimum a strategy needs to have any chance of delivering. That fewer than half clear it is the finding, not a limitation of it.

The count depends on what is published, and departments may be doing more than they publish. Possible, and where evidence was missing the test was marked unclear rather than failed. But a strategy whose funding and progress cannot be found by a diligent outsider two years on has a transparency problem that is itself a delivery risk, and it is the situation an auditor will find later.

Prototypes lock in the wrong thing. They can. Section 5 sets out the safeguard, and it is worth adding that a document locks in the wrong thing too; it just does so invisibly, because nobody can test it.

Not every strategy should be delivered. Agreed. The recommendation is not that every strategy must cross the gap. It is that a strategy which is not meant to be delivered should be labelled as a statement of direction, so that the ones which are meant to be delivered can be held to the standard.

Feedback, corrections and counter-examples are welcome and will be reflected in future editions.

Appendix A. Desktop count: method and sample frame

The purpose of the count is to produce a single, defensible headline figure: the proportion of published government strategies that have a funded delivery vehicle two years after release.

Sample frame

- Jurisdictions: Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.
- Window: strategies, plans and frameworks with a public launch date between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2024, so that every strategy has had at least two years by the time of the count.
- Inclusion: a document published by a department or statutory body that sets multi-year direction across a portfolio or policy domain, with named actions or priorities. Corporate plans, annual reports and single-project business cases are excluded.
- Target size: 60 strategies, ten per jurisdiction, selected from official publication lists rather than by search ranking, to limit selection bias.

What is checked for each strategy

Test	Evidence that passes	Where to look
A. Named owner	A unit, role or person publicly identified as accountable for delivery	Strategy text, agency website, annual report
B. Implementation plan	A dated, public implementation or action plan with milestones, released within twelve months of launch	Agency website, annual report, parliamentary tabling
C. Funded delivery vehicle	A budget measure, program, team or funded project that can be traced to the strategy in budget papers or annual reports	Budget papers, portfolio budget statements, annual reports
D. Baseline and measures	Published indicators with a baseline value at or near launch	Strategy text, first progress report
E. Progress report	Any public progress report within two years of launch	Agency website, annual report

A strategy is counted as having crossed the gap if it passes tests A, C and either B or E. Each judgement is recorded with the source URL and access date so that the count can be reproduced and challenged.

Results: 75 strategies, September 2026

The count was run in four passes. The first reached 30 strategies and skewed towards flagship strategies. The second added 25, the third 18 and the fourth 3, each weighted deliberately to the

thinner jurisdictions and to second-tier strategies, and each excluding everything counted before; one third-pass strategy was removed as outside the window. Final coverage: Commonwealth 12, New South Wales 13, Queensland 12, Western Australia 13, South Australia 13, Victoria 12. All 75 were checked against the five tests with primary government sources; where evidence could not be located the test was marked unclear rather than failed. Access date for all sources is 9 September 2026 [22].

Jurisdiction	Sampled	Crossed	Partial	Not crossed	Crossed %
Commonwealth	12	5	5	2	42%
New South Wales	13	3	3	7	23%
Queensland	12	6	5	1	50%
Western Australia	13	4	7	2	31%
South Australia	13	5	4	4	38%
Victoria	12	6	4	2	50%
Total	75	29	28	18	39%

Table A1. Results by jurisdiction. By tier: flagship 14 of 23 crossed (61 per cent); second-tier 15 of 52 crossed (29 per cent). All eighteen not-crossed strategies were second-tier. Figures are after verification of five near-miss strategies (see notes).

Test	Passed	Rate
A. Named owner	75 of 75	100%
B. Implementation plan within 12 months	29 of 75	39%
C. Funded delivery vehicle traceable to the strategy	40 of 75	53%
D. Baseline and measures published	34 of 75	45%
E. Progress report within 2 years	32 of 75	43%

Table A2. Pass rate by test. Among the 29 strategies with a plan, the median lag from launch was zero months; two strategies released plans well after twelve months (Victoria's Gas Substitution Roadmap at about 17 months and the Victorian Health and Medical Research Strategy at about two years) and are recorded as failing B.

Sensitivity: what if the unclear results are wrong?

Where a document could not be found the test was marked unclear and treated as not passed. That is conservative, and a reader is entitled to ask what happens under the opposite assumption. The table re-scores every strategy under four alternatives.

Scenario	Crossed	Flagship	Second-tier	Gap
Base: unclear treated as not found	29 (39%)	61%	29%	32 points

Scenario	Crossed	Flagship	Second-tier	Gap
Unclear progress reports (E) assumed to exist	36 (48%)	70%	38%	31 points
Unclear plans and progress reports (B, E) assumed to exist	37 (49%)	74%	38%	35 points
Unclear funding (C) assumed to exist	40 (53%)	65%	48%	17 points
Every unclear result assumed to exist	69 (92%)	96%	90%	5 points

Table A3. Sensitivity of the headline results to the treatment of unclear results. Calculated in the companion workbook [22].

Two things follow. The tier gap survives every reading except the extreme one, in which every document that could not be found is assumed to exist; under that reading almost every strategy crosses and the count measures nothing. And the gap is most sensitive to funding: assume the unfound money exists and the gap halves to 17 points. That is why the report describes the tier gap as part funding gap and part visibility gap. The base case remains the right one to report, because a strategy whose funding cannot be found by a diligent outsider two years on is, for every practical purpose, unfunded.

Strategies counted

The 75 strategies, with the five test results, dollar figures, notes and primary sources for each, are published in the companion workbook [22]. The workbook calculates every table in this appendix from the evidence sheet by formula, so a corrected judgement flows through to the totals. Corrections and counter-examples are welcome.

A note on consistency. The count was built in three passes. The definition of test E tightened between them: the first pass required a document describing itself as a progress report, while later passes and the verification also accepted an agency annual report that reports substantively against the strategy by name. The later definition is the one stated in this appendix. The first thirty strategies were therefore re-scored on test E against it. Six scores changed (three to passed, two to failed, one to unclear); no strategy changed result. The re-check also moved the WA Cruise Tourism plan from crossed to partial, because its annual reports track the cruise sector rather than the plan by name, and removed the Queensland Youth Justice Strategy 2024–2028, released in November 2024, as outside the window.

Notes on the count

- The SA Hydrogen Jobs Plan was funded in the 2022–23 Budget on 2 June 2022, one month before the window opened. Excluding it gives 28 of 74 crossed, or 38 per cent; the conclusions do not change.
- Strategies launched in 2024 had not reached the two-year mark at the count date, so an unclear result on test E for those reflects timing rather than failure.

- Test C was marked unclear, not failed, wherever a dollar figure cited in a strategy could not be tied to a budget line item. Several Western Australian strategies fall into this category: funding maps to the broader Diversify WA framework rather than to the strategy itself.
- The Victorian Skills Plan is recorded as partial only because it steers existing Free TAFE and VET funding rather than carrying a discrete appropriation; on any practical view it is delivering.
- The frame reached its target of 75. One third-pass Queensland strategy was removed after its release date was confirmed as outside the window, and a fourth pass added three second-tier strategies (Queensland Small Business Strategy 2024–27, the National Health and Climate Strategy, and the NSW Biosecurity and Food Safety Strategy 2022–2030) from the domains the frame had not yet covered.
- Pre-existing money does not count. Where a strategy's headline funding was announced before the strategy existed (the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan is the clearest case), test C was marked failed, because the strategy did not win that money and cannot direct it.
- Five strategies scored as near misses were re-checked against annual reports, budget papers and ministerial statements. Two moved to crossed on test E: the Queensland Trade and Investment Strategy (delivery reported in TIQ annual reports 2022–23 and 2023–24, with \$17.15 million of operating expenditure attributed to the strategy in a parliamentary tabled paper) and the South Australian Economic Statement (progress reported in the DPC annual report 2023–24; the measurement framework followed in May 2024). The WA Cruise Tourism plan was first scored as a qualified pass and then, on a second check against the final definition of test E, as partial. Two were confirmed as failing both B and E: the National Battery Strategy, which has \$523 million attached and no implementation plan or progress report, and the WA whole-of-government ACCO Strategy, for which the implementation plan initially assumed to apply belongs to a different 2022 Department of Communities strategy.
- Sampling used official publication lists and media release archives for each jurisdiction rather than search ranking. Corporate plans, agency strategic plans, annual reports and single-project business cases were excluded; two Victorian candidates for the second pass were agency strategic plans and were excluded on that rule. Strategies just outside the window (for example the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041, June 2021; the WA Renewable Hydrogen Strategy, October 2024) were excluded. The next edition will complete the frame to 60.

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